# The Experiences of School Leaders' Shifting Paradigms from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline

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Thesis

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# Brandon University

## FACULTY OF EDUCATION

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Senate for acceptance, a **MASTER'S THESIS** entitled:

**The Experiences of School Leaders' Shifting Paradigms from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline**

Submitted by: **Natashalee Thompson**

In partial fulfillment for the requirements for the degree of

## MASTER OF EDUCATION

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## Abstract

This qualitative study used a phenomenological approach to describe Manitoba school leaders' subjective experience of shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline and the influence of laws on that shift. Multiple interviews spread over four months, with three school leaders, a teacher, behaviour consultant and school peace officer, generated transcripts which were used to describe the essence of the transition experience. Push and pull factors, such as the impact of punitive and positive discipline on behaviour, academic performance, and inclusion, served as catalysts for a journey. The journey was fuelled by beliefs about the role of the school and discipline, and school leaders' belief systems. Canadian federal and provincial laws impacted participating school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the Manitoba *Human Rights Code* positively and directly influenced school-based discipline by encouraging school leaders to utilize approaches that safeguarded legal, equality, and protected rights. The Manitoba *Public Schools Act, Education Administration Act* and *Safe Schools Charter,* did not encourage a shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline, due to the ambiguous justification of suspension as a disciplinary measure. The study generated implications and recommendations for school leaders, policymakers, and for further research. Contributions from this research include suggested positive language to use with students and the I-RISE model, a positive discipline framework that can be utilized by school leaders to support students and maintain a positive school environment.

*Keywords:* school-based discipline and the law, punitive discipline, positive discipline, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Manitoba Public Schools Act

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# Dedication

This study is dedicated to the memory of Racheal Tater (Mama) for being a firm believer in education and for investing in my early and critical years of academic development despite all our struggles then. This study is also dedicated to my amazing sons, K'Jean and K'Mor who have both "studied" with me over the years. I hope you both realize the true benefits of education.

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# Chapter One: Introduction

Traditional discipline has dominated the educational sphere for decades. These disciplinary measures range from corporal punishment, detention and suspension, to expulsion (Hannigan & Hannigan, 2016, p. 40). However, there have been calls for educational institutions to eliminate the punitive and exclusionary disciplinary measures in favour of the utilization of positive discipline in schools. Statistical data have revealed that these exclusionary measures do not reduce, change or prevent behavioural problems within educational institutions. These measures are often associated with destabilizing the school environment based on negative outcomes such as hostility in regards to the school and community. Often, youths who are suspended and expelled are impacted by other social inequities that may lead to involvement with the "juvenile justice system" (Hannigan & Hannigan, 2016, p. 40). However, positive discipline is an approach that uses discipline as an inclusive measure to teach rather than punish. The approach is theoretically known for fostering a positive school climate for all stakeholders involved. Canada, an affluent country, has moved toward employing positive discipline in educational institutions. The Canadian province of Ontario seems to be the pioneer in regards to the positive disciplinary approach with its structured progressive disciplinary model. In a similar manner, other provincial educational ministries, such as Manitoba have been trending toward positive approaches. Manitoba's philosophical approach toward discipline is rooted in inclusion and resiliency (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 2). Critical to this philosophical approach is the need to foster positive relationships to enhance a positive school climate. Therefore, any contemporary approach to educational discipline in Manitoba must be strength-based, inclusive and relational.

Seemingly, it is based on this context that the school divisions within Manitoba are moving to include positive disciplinary approaches that use "discipline to teach rather than punish" (Education Development Center, 2013, para. 2). Restorative justice is being utilized as a positive approach and a response to the archaic and exclusionary disciplinary measures. The utilization of restorative justice as a disciplinary approach is fairly new in Manitoba. For this reason, there is no positive discipline framework or policy document to guide the implementation and process of restorative practices in schools. However, it is evident that the incorporation and use of "practices implemented" in school divisions must be done within the ambits of: the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, *The Public Schools Act* (Manitoba), *Safe Schools Charter* (Manitoba), *The Education Administration Act* (Manitoba), *The Human Rights Code* (Manitoba) and the *Youth and Criminal Justice Act* (Brandon School Division, 2017). The traditional use of restorative justice is deeply associated with the criminal justice system. Therefore, it was very interesting to unearth the way in which this judicial approach is used within the educational realm. My study showed that restorative justice and restitution were similar approaches to discipline. There were other positive disciplinary approaches utilized by school leaders; PAX, discipline with dignity, and the Seven Teachings. Pax is the Latin word for peace, but PAX represents peace, productivity, health, and happiness (PAXIS Institute, 2018). The PAX model was utilized to improve self-regulation in students. Discipline with dignity and the Seven Teachings were approaches used to maintain discipline while simultaneously treating students with respect. Accordingly, this thesis examined how school leaders' experienced a shift in paradigm from punitive to positive school-based discipline and also, the influence of federal and provincial laws on school leaders as they shifted from punitive to positive school-based discipline. From my study, I state implications and propose recommendations based on the

relevant research data to enhance the viability of positive discipline (with the use of restitution, restorative justice, discipline with dignity, and the Seven Teachings) as a contemporary alternative to exclusionary and punitive disciplinary approaches.

## Defining Restorative Justice

The use of restorative justice in Canada's criminal justice system has been happening for over 40 years (Department of Justice, 2017). Based on the criminal justice context, restorative justice is:

> An approach to justice that focuses on addressing the harm caused by crime while holding the offender responsible for their actions, by providing an opportunity for the parties directly affected by the crime – victims, offenders and communities – to identify and address their needs in the aftermath of a crime. Restorative justice is based on an understanding that crime is a violation of people and relationships. The principles of restorative justice are based on respect, compassion and inclusivity. Restorative justice encourages meaningful engagement and accountability and provides an opportunity for healing, reparation and reintegration. (Department of Justice, 2017)

The definition above reiterates that traditionally, restorative justice involves "the victim, the offender, and the community in a search for solutions which promote repair, reconciliation, and reassurance . . . and restoration of relationships" (Leung, 2001, pp. 1-2), to ensure a safe and tension-free community environment. However, critical concepts of the definition are accountability and inclusivity because these two aspects are inextricably linked to the success of the restorative process. Therefore, any educational use of restorative justice as a disciplinary measure must be centred on accountability and inclusion.

However, this traditional definition may not be applicable to the educational context, though it may bear some semblance. Practically, disciplinary situations involve victims and offenders. Nevertheless, it is my belief that students should never be labelled as victims and offenders within a school context. I believe assigning these labels to students will result in an imbalance of power that may be crippling to inclusivity. They are students and they may make mistakes, but should not be labelled as bad because of trying to meet a need. Students should be supported to better meet their needs appropriately. Also, the school environment ought to be operated differently from a court or a justice committee with regards to restorative justice. Hence, restorative justice can be seen as a habitual process that seeks to prevent "problems from occurring . . . versus something we use as an occasional tool when a child is in trouble" (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013, pp. 11-12). This habitual engagement of restorative practices within the learning environment is key to an educational as opposed to a judicial system. Therefore, restorative justice as a disciplinary model "requires a fundamental paradigm shift that addresses not just discipline but the entire school climate and community" (Payne & Welch, 2015, p. 541). Ideally, educational restorative justice ought to be used as a preventative, rather than reactive, measure as utilized in the judicial realm.

## Purpose of Research

Based on the relatively new nature of the implementation of restorative justice as an educational disciplinary measure in Manitoba, the purpose of this research was to assess school leaders' experiences as they shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline as well as the influence of federal and provincial laws on such a shift. The literature reviewed echoed that the effectiveness of restorative justice lies in its use as a philosophical rather than a reactive approach at all levels of the educational system (Payne & Welch, 2015, p. 541). Therefore, this

issue was of great interest to the researcher, because the manner in which positive discipline is implemented and utilized in schools, is critical to its effectiveness as a response to exclusionary disciplinary measures. While there were other factors influencing the effectiveness of positive disciplinary practices in schools, such as laws, if educators are able to integrate those practices as a philosophy, it would help to improve students' behaviour. Hence, in assessing the effectiveness of positive disciplinary practices in schools, I provide recommendations that could be beneficial to a Manitoba policy framework and to educators that will enhance the effectiveness of positive discipline as the response to punitive discipline. Additionally, exploring positive discipline has cemented my notion that punitive measures are not as effective, based on personal experiences with corporal punishment and exclusionary practices.

## Personal Educational Context

My Jamaican educational journey has been a rollercoaster one. At an early age, I was spotted as the brilliant child within my family. I was raised by my great grandmother (Mama) for the early years of my life. My Mama recognized that these were critical stages of my educational development that were very important. My family was from a very humble beginning and Mama relied on odd housekeeping jobs and infrequent 'foreign money' from her son to ensure that we had food to survive. However, she was a firm believer in education and she would ensure that I attended school with the requisite resources. Attending primary school was never easy; I was the child who went home for lunch because Mama could not afford to give me lunch money. Despite the poverty, I excelled well academically and made Mama proud. I was never the child to be disciplined by teachers. However, I can vividly recall being beaten my primary school principal.

The licks (a colloquial word for beating in the Jamaican context) were a consequence of Mama's foreign son and family spending time at our dwelling. For the weeks that they were there, I had to wake up and wait for them to finish eating in the mornings in order to wash the dishes before I could go to school. It was a Monday morning and Mama was cognizant of the time. She recognized that I would be late for school and asked me to leave the dishes. However, her son overruled the decision, stating that I was a girl and must do things in the house. Mama was never the confrontational one, and being that we relied on the infrequent foreign money, I had to remain and wash the dishes. I arrived very late at school that morning and the principal lined up all the latecomers, approximately 101 students. He got his straps and started to beat us, he hit us in rounds of tens. I was in the fourth batch of ten. However, surprisingly, after beating each batch, he went across the road where a bar and restaurant establishment were located. He allegedly went to take a shot of rum before administering the licks to each batch. When it was my turn and I got my licks, there were swellings and red marks all over my hands.

Consequently, my initial personal interest in regards to the use of restorative justice as a disciplinary approach spurred from the 'Monday Morning Licks'. Notably during those days, the use of corporal punishment was permitted in Jamaica. Currently, corporal punishment remains lawful in schools based on common law principles, with the exception of early childhood institutions, as long as it is administered moderately and reasonably. However, the Jamaican Ministry of Education has reiterated on several occasions that schools should desist from administering corporal punishment (Newell, 2010, p. 2). Looking back at the Monday morning licks, I never thought they were justified, and believed I was physically abused based on my impoverished circumstances. The approximately 101 students who were late that morning were marginalized from the rest of the school population and humiliated in the hot Caribbean sun.

Thereafter, if Mama realized that I was going to be late for school, she did not bother to send me. Accordingly, the licks I received did not address the cause of my late arrival, which was the fact that the foreigners were there; instead it deterred me from accessing education.

My experience at the high school level as a student in Jamaica also increased my interest in positive approaches to discipline. Based on my academic prowess, I was placed in the best traditional high school in my parish. At that point, Mama was no longer with me because she passed away just after receiving my placement for high school and yes, the struggles continued. The norm was to eat at break-time and do without lunch because I could not afford it. It was hard to feel included in a school with a lot of "rich" children who were able to afford the most expensive lunch. The high school was about a 35 minute trip from where I lived, there were no buses available and obtaining a route taxi from the very rural parts of the parish was very difficult as a student because we paid half the adult fare. A route taxi operates like a bus within the North American context but without any fixed schedules. Accordingly, taxi operators were not inclined to take students until adults were unavailable. This taxi difficulty translated into being late on numerous occasions to the prestigious high school. These late-comings were deemed inappropriate and I was threatened with a transfer to a school that was closer to home. This exclusionary measure would not solve the fact that taxi-operators would not transport school children unless there were no adults. I could not walk to the other school either, and again this so-called approach to deter my late-coming, which was considered an inappropriate behaviour, denied me access to education because if I would be late, sometimes I would just go back home.

University life at the undergraduate level was also riddled with its challenges; I wanted to pursue something in the medical or legal field but that would have translated to a higher student

loan debt. For that reason, I majored in Spanish and did a double minor in Linguistics and Political Science. Those three years made me more aware of my Caribbean and international environs, which could be directly attributable to Political Science. Doing a minor in Political Science meant I had to be up-to-date with the latest news happenings in order to contribute to tutorial discussions, write term papers and perform well on examinations. During this period, I was exposed to many violent acts throughout the media in Jamaica and other countries that sometimes resulted in fatalities. Frequently, these acts spurred from small issues that could be rectified peacefully. At that time, I wondered about alternate measures to solving issues within communities especially based on the perceived notion that many police officers were not seen as trustworthy. However, I am of the view now that the effective use of restorative practices within those communities could have prevented the violent acts.

Additionally, I have taught for seven years within the Jamaican educational system. Teaching in a non-traditional high school located in a volatile community meant having a number of discipline-related matters to address. As a young teacher, I struggled with finding disciplinary measures that would address behaviour because I was not then a trained teacher. Initially, I would send all disciplinary cases to the Grade Supervisor or Principal. It was very difficult to handle the varied disciplinary issues because the entire school environment was an initial shock to me. I never imagined that an educational institution could be plagued with so many issues. I had been through a very academic high school and things identified as disciplinary issues were miniature when compared to the disciplinary concerns in this non-traditional high school.

However, as I developed as a teacher, I began to employ disciplinary strategies to address issues that I felt were within my jurisdiction as a teacher. These disciplinary measures included

students remaining after school to do class work for example. However, there were points at which I felt I was punishing myself as well because I had to supervise these students. Hence, there were times when I just did not administer any disciplinary measures for inappropriate behaviour. Accordingly, the punitive measure did not seem effective in this regard. Also, I can remember a case in which a female student called me a "john-crow". John-crow is synonymous with a vulture, but when used in our Jamaican context to refer to an individual, it is a derogatory term. The matter was taken to the principal and the student was given the maximum suspension of two weeks. However, shortly after the student's return to school, she was disrespectful to another teacher. Therefore, it was logical to deduce that this exclusionary measure did not change the student's behaviour.

In the summer of 2016, I came to the Canadian province of Manitoba to pursue graduate studies in the field of Educational Administration. The learning context was different but refreshing, as I was exposed to a new educational realm. The different courses associated with my program enhanced my leadership capabilities. However, there are two courses that stimulated interest in this topic. The course Administrative Leadership in Educational Institutions enabled me to identify myself as predominantly a social justice leader. The guiding principle for social justice leadership is that of equity. Hence, "issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions . . ." (Theoharis, 2007, p. 223) that inhibit the academic success of students, would be of concern to social justice leaders. Therefore, I believe that the application of any disciplinary measures within the school context must be inclusive and enable affected students to be treated the same as their counterparts. On the other hand, the course School Administration and the Law heightened my interest in investigating the notion of restorative justice as a disciplinary measure. The legal

knowledge garnered from this course demonstrated to me that the use of restorative justice as an approach to discipline can be effective or ineffective depending on the implementation and use of restorative justice practices in Manitoba schools.

There is the perception that the use of restorative justice in response to discipline is not a punitive measure. As a result, in order to submerge myself into the notion of restorative justice, in 2018 I did a course with the John Howard Society located in Brandon, Manitoba. It was important for me to understand the traditional and judicial manner in which restorative justice operates. Throughout the Inter-Personal Conflict Resolution and Mediation Skills (The John Howard Society of Brandon, 2019) training program, it was reiterated that restorative justice was reconceptualised as punitive approach. Therefore, this judicial context further stimulated my interest in the topic in order to discover the manner in which restorative justice practices are being utilized as a positive and inclusive approach to discipline in Manitoba schools.

## Background to the Study

In this section, I focus on the need for implementing restorative justice practices to make disciplinary measures in Manitoba more equitable and inclusive in educational contexts. Accordingly, the inclusive and equitable approach must consider a number of factors that are vital to the success and effectiveness of the use of restorative justice in Manitoban schools. Based on Manitoba's philosophical perspective as it relates to education, the implementation and use of restorative justice practices should be a preventative rather than reactive approach to discipline. Thus, the use of restorative justice should enhance pedagogical practices through the continuous use of restorative practices such as circle meetings, peer mediation, conflict resolution skills, preventing exclusion of students, and supports for students who need them. These practices help to prevent behavioural problems, foster healthy student relationships,

strengthen the school community and provide a safe and inclusive school environment (Liebmann, 2007, pp. 117, 119). However, within the Manitoban context, there is also the need for educators to observe the rights of students based on the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Charter)* (1982), as well as to satisfy the requirements of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)* (2002) when restorative justice practices are employed. The *Charter* and the *YCJA* set out basic liberties that must be observed for citizens and/or permanent residents and youth respectively. For this reason, any disciplinary measure utilized must be within the ambits of the *Charter* and *YCJA.*

**Traditional Discipline as an Exclusionary Approach**

School leaders have the responsibility to ensure that education is administered in a fair, equitable and inclusive manner. Therefore, the use of any disciplinary measure should be "consistent with the principles of a social justice perspective" (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2012, p.3) to ensure that the requisite approaches utilized do not place students at any disadvantage. Therefore, the use of exclusionary disciplinary measures in Manitoba is not consistent with the *Safe and Caring Schools: A Whole School Approach to Planning for Safety and Belonging* (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017a) document and the 2013 amendment made to the Manitoba *Public Schools Act* (*PSA)* (1987) that jointly echo the need for school boards to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017a, p. 3). As a result, the use of traditional disciplinary measures such as suspensions and expulsions that exclude students from the school environment can be seen as an unjust, inequitable and an exclusionary approach when social justice lenses are applied. Accordingly, there is the need for Manitoba school divisions to desist from utilizing exclusionary disciplinary measures because

they contravene the right to an education in the *PSA* and the philosophy of inclusion articulated by Manitoba Education and Training.

**Restorative Justice as a Positive Disciplinary Tool**

Restorative justice is a logical response to traditional and exclusionary discipline measures and is seen as a positive disciplinary approach. However, utilizing restorative justice practices as a reactive disciplinary measure can lower its viability as an effective disciplinary option. Hence, restorative justice practices in schools should never be used as a tool for "behaviour modification" or to reduce suspensions and expulsions but "rather a whole philosophy that would need to be adopted . . . at all levels of the educational system" (Payne & Welch, 2015, p. 541), if the goal is for restorative practices in schools to be positive, effective, and sustained. Accordingly, restorative justice should be implemented and utilized as a philosophical approach by utilizing proactive strategies to respond to disciplinary challenges. Restorative justice should not be used to lower the criticisms related to zero-tolerance disciplinary measures that require "out-of-school suspension and expulsion" (Shah, 2012), but rather as a philosophical tool. It is logical that the law will influence the philosophical and educational contexts in which restorative justice is utilized.

**Influence of Canadian Law on Educational Restorative Justice**

Critical to the effectiveness of educational restorative practices are legal ramifications that are possible if the restorative justice practices employed by institutions do not observe rights guaranteed by the *Charter* and requirements of the *YCJA*. In the event that restorative justice practices in schools require the parties to be involved in mediation, for example, educators must ensure that due process is followed. Therefore, educational restorative justice remains a voluntary process until the law stipulates otherwise. Accordingly, it is my interpretation of the

*YCJA* that students who are not yet 12 years old are unable to consent to mediation without the permission of parents or guardians. Students who are 12 years and older may consent to mediation without the consent of parents or guardians. However, where students, in general, are arbitrarily detained for questioning or mediation without the right to counsel (parents, guardians or legal representatives), this amounts to a breach of their fundamental rights guaranteed by the *Charter* (Canadian Charter, 1982, s. 9 & s. 10 (b)). In a similar manner, the *YCJA* stipulates that any youth (in this case any student) who is detained must be made aware of his or her right to counsel whether legal or parental (YCJA, 2002, s. 25).

Therefore, within the Canadian educational realm, administrators and teachers are viewed as persons of authority. An educator becomes a person of authority by virtue of the young person or student's "subjective reasonable belief of [such] connection" (*R. v. M.G.*, 2015, para. 21) and the reality is that educators are regarded as authoritative figures within educational institutions. Furthermore, the inability of educators regarded as persons of authority to differentiate their role as an educator performing disciplinary measures, as opposed to acting as agents of the state, can interfere with the fundamental rights of the students. In the event where the use of restorative justice practices reveals information that falls outside the scope of the institution, educators should permit the relevant authorities to perform their roles.

Accordingly, any cooperation with educators and investigators in regards to evidence will deem them as agents of the state. For this reason, any such cooperation must observe the rights of the *Charter* and meet the requirements of the *YCJA.* Failure to observe these rights and/or requirements may interfere with the investigation since the evidence may be ruled inadmissible by the courts. Hence, though teachers and principals have the duty to supervise and to maintain a safe and inclusive school environment, it is logical based on case laws that educators do not

understand when a matter exceeds their educational jurisdiction in regards to discipline. Therefore, there is a legal component that educators must understand and acknowledge when employing restorative justice practices as a disciplinary measure. Consequently, the influence of Canadian law on educational disciplinary practices was a significant aspect of this study.

## Significance of the Study

The research is significant for two reasons; it highlights the need for Manitoba schools to increase the use of positive and inclusive approaches to discipline, and it addresses a gap in the literature regarding the absence of research that focuses on school leaders' shifts from punitive to positive discipline in the context of federal and provincial laws. Logically, the exclusionary disciplinary measures utilized by Manitoban schools are not aligned with the recommended inclusive school environment. Therefore, there is the need for any positive approach to discipline to be inclusive and enable students to have access to education. As a result, my initial aim was to demonstrate that in order for restorative justice to be effective, positive and inclusive, it must be applied as a philosophical approach that is preventative rather than a reactive measure to discipline. However, the study was significant in regards to the implementation and use of positive disciplinary practices in schools.

Additionally, there is the absence of research that focuses on the effect of Canadian laws in regards to the use of positive discipline such as restorative justice in Manitoba schools. There are a number of case laws and acts that reiterate the need for school administrators to recognize and observe fundamental *Charter* rights and requirements of the *YCJA*. However, there seems to be a lack of research that specifically looks at the possibility of laws limiting the effectiveness and viability of positive discipline such as restorative justice as an approach to discipline in Manitoba's schools. Based on case laws, it is not unusual for schools and school boards to have a

tortious claim brought against them in regards to disciplinary measures. These claims can result in school boards paying out a hefty sum of money to complainants if found to be in breach of *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* or human rights for example. For this reason, my research in this area is relevant based on the current nature of positive discipline in Manitoba.

Therefore, the findings of this research will contribute to Manitoba society, especially to the work of educational practitioners who seek guidance in this relatively new field. Additionally, the study will be beneficial to school administrators as it relates to policy and implementation concerning the use of positive disciplinary approaches. These findings may contribute to the professional growth of educators in relation to the use of positive practices in light of legal ramifications. Finally, the recommendations based on the findings can improve the effectiveness of positive discipline by providing a guide for school leaders and policymakers to guarantee inclusive, safe, and caring school environments.

## Summary

In this chapter, I sought to give an overview and rationale for the direction of my research. My personal experiences as a student and teacher and the popularity of restorative justice as an approach to discipline have propelled me in this research direction. As a result, the research assessed the effectiveness of positive discipline when compared to punitive discipline by focussing on how school leaders experience a shift in paradigm from punitive to positive school-based discipline as well as the influence of federal and provincial laws on such a shift. The effectiveness of restorative justice, a positive disciplinary approach, was determined by the breadth and the degree of its implementation and use. Based on the background to the study, Manitoba has an inclusive educational philosophy, but exclusionary disciplinary measures are utilized by school divisions. Furthermore, the background demonstrated that there was a lack of

research connecting Canadian laws to the practice of restorative justice in schools. Accordingly, chapter two reviews literature regarding traditional disciplinary approaches, the legality concerning traditional disciplinary approaches, alternate responses to traditional disciplinary approaches and the role of the administrator in the restorative context.

# Chapter Two: Literature Review

My aim in this chapter is to enable the reader to understand the trajectory of school-related discipline in Canada, and in particular the province of Manitoba. Consequently, the first part of this chapter reviews the literature relating to traditional responses to students' misbehaviour. These traditional responses included corporal punishment and exclusionary discipline methods in schools. Additionally, the first part of the literature review focusses on the legality concerning traditional disciplinary approaches in regards to specific aspects of federal and provincial laws. In the following section, the literature centres on alternate responses to traditional school-related discipline which include progressive discipline and restorative approaches such as mediation and Circle of Courage. The final part of the literature review focusses on the role of the school administrator in regards to the effective and positive use of restorative justice practices.

## Traditional Disciplinary Approaches

### Corporal Punishment

School-related discipline in Canada has been on a path from abusive and punitive to positive methods (Milne & Aurini, 2017, p. 31). Traditional responses to school-related disciplinary issues included the use of corporal punishment. Therefore:

> The corporal punishment of children in . . . schools has an enduring, if not exactly exalted, history. The physical discipline and punishment of the young reaches back to ancient Greece and in many parts of the world continues today . . . Harsh forms of classroom discipline survived most of the twentieth century in North America, even in the wake of other major educational reforms. (Axelrod, 2010, p. 262)

For this reason, the history of corporal punishment suggests that the abusive disciplinary approach was well glorified and accepted. However, it was noted by Gershoff (2017) that primary or elementary students were the most likely to be physically punished (p. 224). The claim that primary or elementary students were more likely to be punished seems logical because high school students would be more likely to retaliate based on their stage of development. As a result, Gershoff (2017) purported that school corporal punishment involves "the use of objects . . . including sticks, straps and wooden boards" (p. 224) to inflict physical punishment on students by teachers or principals. Gershoff (2017) further contended that "children have reported being hit with hands or objects on virtually every part of their bodies" (p. 224) for any considered misbehaviour.

Therefore, the aim of school corporal punishment was to "halt the offense, prevent its recurrence and set an example for others" (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP), 2014, para. 1) within the institution. Furthermore, the long-term objective of school corporal punishment was to "change the child's behaviour and to make it more consistent with the adult's expectations" (AACAP, 2014, para. 1) as a means of maintaining discipline in schools. Though students suffered as a result of corporal punishment, it was justified by different stakeholders of the community. Accordingly:

> Governments, religious leaders, educators, and parents commonly believed that corporal punishment was righteous and efficient. Used appropriately, it would secure or restore order, discipline the body and motivate the mind, imbue religious and moral lessons, and both punish and prevent aberrant behaviour. (Axelrod, 2010, p. 263)

Hence, the use of corporal punishment within schools was the norm. Furthermore, the extent to which the student was hurt physically and/or emotionally was never considered relevant as was the case with students in residential schools.

**Corporal Punishment: the case of residential schools.** Residential schools were "government-sponsored religious schools established to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture" (Miller, 2017, para. 1), with the focus on educating and integrating them into the Canadian society. There were approximately 139 residential schools in Canada and approximately 14 were located in the province of Manitoba during a time period that spanned from 1831 to 1996 (Miller, 2017; Truth and Reconciliation, n.d.). These institutions were federally and religiously operated. Additionally, "until the 1950s, attendance for children aged five to sixteen was compulsory" (MacDonald & Hudson, 2012, p. 431) and thus, Aboriginal parents had no other option but to send their children to these schools, knowing that they could do more harm than good. This context was indicative of the role of colonialism and structural racism that determine who are the recipients of corporal punishment and other negative disciplinary actions.

Hence, corporal punishment was a well-known disciplinary method used in residential schools across Canada. Children were segregated from their families and punished severely on a daily basis. Sharpe (2011) claimed that:

> Aboriginal children in residential schools were subjected to extreme degrees of cruelty . . . Vicious, and often arbitrary punishments were part of the fabric of daily life. Children were routinely given public beatings for misbehaving or speaking their language. (pp. 214- 215)

Therefore, disciplinary measures utilized in residential schools were very punitive. Furthermore, Chrisjohn's study (as cited in Sharpe, 2011) confirmed that "children were beaten with: leather and rubber straps, straps with tacks, nails or wires embedded in them, boxing gloves, wooden boards, belts, sticks, classroom pointers, whips and horse harness straps" (p. 215), as a result, these students suffered immensely both physically and psychologically in the quest to maintain discipline. One survivor of residential schools recounted the horrors of corporal punishment:

> We were beaten for speaking our language, for recounting our heritage, for not responding quickly enough in class, for not scrubbing the floor hard enough, for not working hard enough in the fields, for crying, or just at the whim of a Brother. All the beatings were with bullwhips. I still have scars from these beatings, both physical and emotional. (Sharper, 2011, p. 216)

Subsequently, the effects of corporal punishment are very negative and lasting. Bryan and Freed (1982) (as cited in Turner & Muller, 2004) claimed that corporal punishment was linked to aggressive and violent behaviour, delinquency and "negative psychological states such as anxiety and depression" (p. 763), which have a significant impact on the victims. In a similar manner, Han (2014) stated that schools that utilized corporal punishment as a disciplinary approach were "negatively associated with serious violent incidents" and are "negatively associated with students' academic aspirations" (p. 229) and thus, the approach to discipline was ineffective.

Logically, the use of corporal punishment in schools would not necessarily aid academic performance considering the physical and psychological damage caused to students. Therefore, based on the damaging effects of corporal punishment as a disciplinary approach, it was absolutely necessary to utilize less punitive and stringent methods. School corporal punishment denied students of their basic natural and human rights. Furthermore, it was clear

that the varying degrees of corporal punishment did not provide a safe and inclusive school environment for each student. Though corporal punishment remained legal until 2004 in Canada, the application of force had to be moderate and reasonably applied to the student for the purpose of correction (*Criminal Code, 1985*). Accordingly, other disciplinary approaches were utilized with the goal of curbing misbehaviour, and exclusionary approaches were one such method.

**Exclusionary Disciplinary Approaches**

Exclusionary disciplinary approaches are widely used as means of behavioural control. This approach removes students from the learning or school environment based on their misbehaviour. The regular exclusionary approaches include; detention, suspension, and expulsion. Detention can be regarded as a temporary exclusion from the learning environment because the "student is detained at the school for specific unacceptable behaviour" (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017b, p. 6) and accordingly, the misdemeanour would be of a minor nature. The "Provincial Code of Conduct" does not offer an explicit definition for suspension. However, it can be inferred from the Code that suspension is the temporary exclusion of the student from the school environment. Suspension ranges from two days to six weeks depending on whether a teacher, principal or superintendent administers it (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017b, p. 7).

On the other hand, expulsion is "the removal of a student from all schools of a school division permanently, at the discretion of the school board" (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017b, p. 9) as a consequence for severe misconduct. Additionally, there are other mild exclusionary approaches that can be utilized in schools in Manitoba based on the "Provincial Code of Conduct". These approaches are; withdrawal from classroom setting and removal of privileges (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017b, p. 6). Withdrawal from the classroom

setting occurs "where specific student conduct is deemed to have a negative impact upon the classroom learning environment, the student is withdrawn to a supervised alternate location to complete his or her assignment" (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017b, p. 6) and therefore, the approach would be a temporary exclusion from the classroom. The removal of privileges includes exclusion from: "the playground, cafeteria, library, extracurricular activities, and/or bus transportation . . ." (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017b, p. 6) for specific misconduct. Therefore, based on the exclusionary approaches that can be utilized in schools in Manitoba, students may be temporarily and/or permanently excluded from academic and social activities depending on the degree of misconduct.

Statistics have revealed that one school division in Manitoba had 1,006 suspensions for the 2014 to 2015 academic school year (CBC News, 2016). This statistics meant that 1,006 students were excluded from the school environment for at least two to five days depending on the severity of the misconduct and whether or not a teacher or principal administered the suspension, or six weeks if the suspension was administered by the superintendent. Perry and Morris' (2014) research revealed that:

> Increasing levels of exclusionary discipline over time are associated with poorer student achievement on end-of-year reading and maths test . . . Exclusionary discipline is an ineffective strategy for creating a positive learning environment and may actually exacerbate hostile conditions that lead to lower academic achievements (p. 1081).

Therefore, the use of suspension as a disciplinary measure is more damaging than benefitting to the classroom learning environment. Furthermore, Green, Maynard and Stegenga (2018) claim that suspension as a disciplinary measure is very reactive, exclusive and discriminatory (p. 419). Accordingly, the exclusionary approaches that can be utilized by schools in Manitoba as a

disciplinary measure do not support the province's philosophy of inclusion (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 1). Additionally, the findings of Perry and Morris (2014) were confirmed in Green, Maynard and Stegenga (2018). The latter research found that exclusionary measures "tend to satisfy the punisher and [have] little lasting effects on the punished" (p. 421) and thus, are ineffective. Also Green, Maynard and Stegenga's (2018) research reveals that high rates of exclusionary measures such as suspension "correlate with low academic achievement and have no academic benefit" (p. 421) and hence, these approaches deny students of their provincial educational rights.

Exclusionary disciplinary measures deny students access to the learning or school environment. Based on Manitoba's exclusionary methods, they can have minimal to damaging effects for excluded and non-excluded students. Furthermore, the literature reveals that exclusionary measures are ineffective as a disciplinary approach based on the recidivism rate and the fact that they do not enhance academic performance. Additionally, based on the "Provincial Code of Conduct", suspensions and expulsions are a temporary or permanent deprivation of students' educational rights respectively. Accordingly, the legal realm in regards to the use of traditional discipline, corporal punishment and exclusionary approaches are examined.

## The Law and Traditional Disciplinary Approaches

Educational institutions are a part of the society that is governed by laws. As a result, these institutions must operate within the legal framework of the society. Accordingly, disciplinary measures that are utilized by educational institutions are subjected to legal scrutiny. Logically, school-related disciplinary approaches in Canada have evolved over the years based on ever-changing legal positions. Therefore, school-related disciplinary approaches in Manitoba are inextricably linked to federal and provincial laws.

**Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**

The *Charter* is part of the Canadian constitutional framework that determines the type of disciplinary approaches that schools in Canada utilize. Though Manitoba possesses its *Human Rights Code*, the *Charter* supersedes it as a sovereign document. Accordingly, the *Charter* applies to "school boards and hence to school administrators' actions in relation to . . . students and, to teachers' actions in relation to students" (Donlevy, 2008, p. 142) and any disciplinary approach utilized must observe the guaranteed rights. With regards to disciplinary approaches, sections nine and 12 of the *Charter* are seemingly applicable. Section nine states that "everyone has the right not to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned" (Charter, 1982) and thus, any disciplinary approach utilized should not involve any form of detention. However, based on the "Provincial Code of Conduct", students can be "detained at the school for specific unacceptable behaviour" (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017b, p. 6) and such detention could be a breach of their fundamental rights. Additionally, section 12 indicates that "everyone has the right not to be subjected to any cruel and unusual treatment or punishment" (Charter, 1982) but traditional disciplinary approaches do not necessarily conform to this right. Logically, the use of corporal punishment denies students of this right. In addition, if exclusionary approaches such as suspension or expulsion are utilized as a disciplinary approach in unusual circumstances, such approaches may breach this fundamental right. Furthermore, based on the context of *Charter* rights, the "correction of a child by force" in section 43 of *Criminal Code* was interpreted by the court to mean for educative and corrective purposes (Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and the Law v. Canada (Attorney General), 2004).

**Criminal Code**

Section 43, *Correction of a child by force* previously enabled the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary approach in Canadian schools. The section states that:

> Every schoolteacher . . . or person standing in the place of parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances. (*Criminal Code,* 1985, p. 54)

Thus, a schoolteacher, principal or any educational personnel who had control of students could discipline them by using force. However, based on the varying manner in which physical force was applied, students were being physically and psychologically abused. Based on the literature examined, the abuse was a prime feature of Canadian residential schools, approximately 14 of which were located in Manitoba.

However, in 2004, the decision made in the case of *Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and the Law* v. *Canada (Attorney General)* required all Canadian school boards to desist from utilizing corporal punishment as a disciplinary approach. The majority of the judges in the case ruled that:

> The force must have been intended to be for educative or corrective purposes, relating to restraining, controlling or expressing disapproval of the actual behaviour of a child capable of benefitting from the correction. While the words "reasonable under the circumstances" on their face are broad, implicit limitations add precision. Section 43 does not extend to an application of force that results in harm or the prospect of harm. Determining what is "reasonable under the circumstances" in the case of child discipline is assisted by Canada's international treaty obligations, the circumstances in which the

> discipline occurs, social consensus, expert evidence and judicial interpretation. When these considerations are taken together, a solid core of meaning emerges for "reasonable under the circumstances", sufficient to establish a zone in which discipline risks criminal sanction. (Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and the Law v. Canada (Attorney General), 2004)

Accordingly, section 43 in the educational context was never meant to physically hurt a student by way of corporal punishment based on the judicial interpretation of the section. Additionally, though section 43 enables educators to physically restrain, control or express disapproval of a student's behaviour, it does not give them immunity, because any unreasonable circumstance may result in criminal liability. Furthermore, section 265 also makes corporal punishment a criminal offence since a "person commits an assault when without the consent of another person; he applies force intentionally to that other person, directly or indirectly" (*Criminal Code*, 1985, p. 328) and therefore, corporal punishment is not only damaging but illegal. Accordingly, students should be able to exercise their right to an education without any unusual treatment or the application of force (except for educative purposes) as provincially legislated in the Manitoba *PSA.*

**Manitoba Public Schools Act**

The *PSA* is one of the legal and provincial policies that govern the operations of schools. Accordingly, section 259, sub-section one states that:

> A person who is six years of age or older on December 31 in a year has the right to attend school from the beginning of the fall term of that year until (a) the last school day of June in the year in which the person becomes 21 years of age; or (b) the day the person

> receives a graduation diploma or certificate of completion, as defined in the regulations; whichever comes first. (p. 239)

Therefore, students between the age of six and 21 years have the right to an education in Manitoba. Furthermore, the only exclusion based on the *Act* with regards to school attendance is in the case of an order being made under the *Public Health Act (PSA*, 1987, p. 241). However, it is logical based on the exclusionary disciplinary approaches utilized that such exclusion denies students the right to an education.

Accordingly, traditional disciplinary approaches are ineffective based on the negative effects that are associated with them. The literature demonstrated that traditional approaches that included corporal punishment and exclusionary measures did not reduce behavioural problems as high recidivism rates were recorded. Additionally, these approaches did not give students an academic advantage. Furthermore, the legal atmosphere does not seem to support the traditional approaches. Also, with citizens becoming more knowledgeable of their rights, it means that other approaches to discipline must be sought to prevent further criminal and tortious liability.

## Progressive Discipline

Progressive discipline is a relatively new approach to discipline that "replaced the *Safe Schools Act* (or "zero tolerance") as the official approach to student discipline in all Ontario public schools" (Milne & Aurini, 2015, p. 52) in 2007. Ontario is seen as a pioneer in regard to positive discipline because it is the only province in Canada to have a legislated disciplinary framework. Also, it is the most populated province that is geographically poised to attract a large number of immigrant children who may be treated unfairly in the absence of a policy. It is logical that these factors along with suspension and expulsion statistics could possibly trigger the provincial government to have legislated a policy that would equally serve each student. Though

Alberta has a document that refers to supporting positive behaviour in schools (Alberta Education, 2007), it is not provincially legislated and therefore, school boards are seemingly able to devise their respective policies. In this regard, the Calgary Board of Education in Alberta has a progressive student discipline policy which "utilizes a continuum of intervention, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate and unacceptable student behaviour and builds upon strategies that promote positive behaviours contributing to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment" (Calgary Board of Education, 2016, p. 2).

In a similar manner, the Ontario progressive approach appears to strike a balance between punitive and positive measures. Consequently:

> Progressive discipline is a whole-school approach that utilizes a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate behaviour and to build upon strategies that promote and foster positive behaviours. When inappropriate behaviours occur, disciplinary measures should be applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 3)

Therefore, progressive discipline takes into account all the contributing factors that may influence students' behaviour. Accordingly, it is not a one size fits all approach because students are dealt with on an individual basis. Hence, "schools should utilize a range of interventions, supports, and consequences that are developmentally and socio-emotionally appropriate and include learning opportunities for reinforcing positive behaviour while helping students to make better choices" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 3). Thus, progressive discipline as a contemporary approach may utilize punitive and/or positive measures in response to behavioural issues.

> Accordingly, the continuum of prevention and intervention programmes include: . . . Three main stages to reflect the severity of the behavioural issue and any other mitigating factors. At the first stage, preventative strategies are initiated to reinforce appropriate behaviour. The second stage of intervention includes helping students learn to identify and replace negative behaviours with positive behaviours. The third more intensive stage attempts to address underlying mental, physical, social, behavioural, and family environmental influences. In stark contrast to the *Safe Schools Act*, progressive discipline builds-in professional discretion and parental involvement in a manner that allows principals and teachers to contextualize student misconduct. (Milne & Aurini, 2017, p. 32)

Therefore, progressive discipline should be utilized as a preventative and philosophical approach to student-related disciplinary issues in order to promote positive behaviour. Furthermore, preventing student misbehaviour is vital to the safe school environment that is required for the success of each student.

Nonetheless, the legislative framework of progressive discipline as an approach can be viewed with different lenses when juxtaposed to exclusionary approaches. Unlike exclusionary measures that:

> . . . Impose automatic and standardized punishment . . . [progressive discipline] gives school staff (e.g., teachers, principals, child and youth workers) a tremendous amount of discretion and allows them to take a variety of considerations into account when determining the duration and severity of disciplinary measures. The policy affords parents opportunities to participate in disciplinary proceedings, work closely with school

> staff to improve their child's behaviour and negotiate appropriate interventions. (Milne & Aurini, 2015, pp. 52 - 53)

Hence, progressive discipline should be a holistic approach that enables the varying stakeholders, especially parents, to be a part of and contribute to disciplinary proceedings. Therefore:

> [Progressive discipline] provides increased accountability, openness and information to parents, guardians and students about the discipline process and procedure. For example, the legislation requires that the school provide information to parents, guardians and students about any program for suspended students and information about the right to appeal the suspension. (Gervais, 2009, para. 7)

Additionally, the theoretical approach seeks to purport that there are extenuating circumstances that may contribute to students' misbehaviour. For this reason:

> Inappropriate behaviour is often a student's way of responding to something in the environment. It may be an attempt to communicate a need, rather than a deliberately aggressive or purposefully negative act. Behaviour can be understood differently when viewed from different perspectives and when the context in which it occurs is taken into account. (Ontario Ministry of Education and Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013, p. 10)

For this reason, the students' individual circumstances must be taken into account before administering positive and/or punitive corrective disciplinary measures. Therefore, the progressive disciplinary approach considers the most appropriate response to unacceptable behaviour based on mitigating circumstances, and the responses may include exclusionary measures.

Based on the individualized nature of progressive discipline, a bias-free school leadership is critical to the fair and effective use of the approach. As a result, the Institute for Education Leadership (as cited in Ontario Ministry of Education and Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013) stated that:

> . . .Successful leaders [are] those who are committed to equity of outcome and who are sensitive to the diversity of the specific settings in which they work. Such leaders strive to create inclusive and instructionally effective learning environments that make it possible for all students to be successful learners. School and system leaders use a growth-oriented and collaborative approach to achieve this goal. (p. 16)

For this reason, the progressive disciplinary approach requires school leaders who are equity promoters and non-discriminatory based on their actions toward student-related disciplinary prevention and/or intervention. Logically, the progressive disciplinary approach necessitates leaders to be knowledgeable of human rights principles and barriers that may affect or marginalize students within the school environment (Ontario Ministry of Education and Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013, p. 16). Consequently:

> This knowledge will help leaders keep all students, with their particular circumstances and needs, in mind when designing prevention, intervention, and disciplinary policies and processes. It will also help them take steps to remove any barriers that may exist. Working to expand knowledge and capacity, foster ongoing communication, and guide members of the school community are essential aspects of leadership in developing and implementing bias-free progressive discipline. (Ontario Ministry of Education and Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013, p. 16)

Therefore, based on Ontario's theoretical and legislative model, the rationale of progressive discipline is to promote positive behaviour, a safe and inclusive school environment, and continuous learning, with the aim of utilizing less exclusionary disciplinary measures through a bias-free approach. Hence, the approach should enable students to maximize their academic potential regardless of any behavioural issues that they may encounter (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 1). Accordingly:

> Students who are suspended for more than five school days, or who are expelled from all schools in the school board, will be offered a board program to give them opportunities to keep learning. For students who are suspended for one to five school days, schools are expected to give them a homework package to allow them to continue their education. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 3)

For this reason, the theoretical and legislative approaches support students' learning despite behavioural or disciplinary outcomes to ensure that students are not placed at a disadvantage academically.

Though the progressive disciplinary approach in Ontario is legislated with varying prevention programs, interventions and supports to promote positive discipline, it can be regarded as a punitive disciplinary measure. Based on the approach, students who must be excluded from the school environment for safety concerns, for example, should be supported academically. However:

> Programs for students on a suspension for six to ten school days are required to have an academic component. Programs for students on a suspension for 11 to 20 days are required to have both an academic and non-academic component. The problem arises when a school board has only one program location and an incident takes place involving

> several students where the police have issued non-association orders as part of the bail or recognizance terms . . . In this regard, the programs for suspended and expelled students require significant additional resources to ensure there are a number of locations and a range of academic and non-academic supports to meet the needs of individual students. (Roher, 2009, p. 14)

Accordingly, the progressive discipline approach can be regarded as a punitive and exclusionary approach in the absence of academic and non-academic support for students who are suspended or expelled.

Furthermore, based on the subjective nature of the progressive discipline approach, school leaders can be unfair and discriminatory in student-related disciplinary issues. The decisions of the Child and Family Service Review Board (CFSRB) in Ontario, since February 2008, confirmed that:

> Boards and principals must take care to ensure that they are proceeding with the appropriate authority under the Act (does the infraction fit within the list of conduct for which a school board may expel a student?) and, in cases where they wish to discipline a student . . . that there is objective evidence that the school climate will be (or has been) affected. (Colman, 2010, p. 3)

Additionally, the incorporation of parents in the disciplinary process can be very difficult for school leaders to navigate justly. Milne and Aurini's (2015) research found that:

> In the case of PD [progressive discipline], while the policy is designed to compensate for social and behavioural deficits, educators are unable to fully tame parents who understand how to effectively use their institutional knowledge in ways that advantages their children involved in disciplinary processes. According[ly] . . ., higher-SES [Socio-

> Economic Status] parents are more likely to participate in disciplinary proceedings, confront authority figures in schools and negotiate more favourable disciplinary outcomes for their children. (p. 68)

On the other hand, students from lower socio-economic status are more likely to be given harsher punishment (Milne & Aurini, 2015, p. 53) because their parents' lack of institutional knowledge prevents them from manipulating the system as effectively as those parents from higher socio-economic status. Hence, the progressive discipline approach may generate subjective or biased actions toward some students and/or class-based inequalities.

Therefore, though progressive discipline is a new approach to discipline that was implemented in the province of Ontario, the approach failed to effectively maintain its legislative positive nature. The literature has demonstrated that the progressive discipline approach can be regarded as an exclusionary approach in the absence of academic support for students who may be excluded from the school environment. Furthermore, the disciplinary approach is subject to school leaders' bias and/or parental manipulation that can be very punitive to students whose parents may not possess the institutional knowledge to negotiate in their best interest. As a result, the progressive discipline approach may further marginalize students who are already disadvantaged based on socio-economic status. Therefore, it is based on the weaknesses of the progressive discipline model that other positive and inclusive responses to student-related disciplinary issues must be sought to manage and/or eliminate student misbehaviour.

## Restorative Justice

There has been an increasing shift from punitive and exclusionary disciplinary methods toward positive approaches in the educational sphere. Thus, given the negative consequences associated with exclusionary and punitive measures for both students and schools, "it is clear that

schools need to reconsider their responses to student misbehaviour [and] restorative justice approaches have been identified by many as a successful alternative to punitive discipline" (Payne & Welch, 2018, p. 225). The initial use of restorative justice practices in schools can be credited to Margaret Thorsborne in the 1990s regarding issues of assault after a school dance in Australia (Gonzalez, 2012, pp. 298 – 299). Thorsborne, upon reflecting on the Australian school context, suggested that the "key characteristics of restorative justice was an attention on relationships between all members of the school community" (Gonzalez, 2012, p. 299). In light of the relational and restorative components, there is a "major appeal for using . . . restorative approach to discipline as an alternative to zero-tolerance policies [because of its] emphasis on respect, accountability, repair of harm, and restoration of the community rather than on punishment and exclusion" (Sumner et al., as cited in Teasley, 2014, p. 132).

The popular disciplinary move to restorative approaches was also supported by Vaandering (2014), whereby:

> Schools across the globe are turning to restorative justice (rj) practices in hopes of developing safe and caring school cultures that will effectively support the academic purpose of schooling. What sets rj apart from other safe-school/anti-bullying initiatives is its philosophical foundation that emphasizes the inherent worth and well-being of all people, the belief that humans are 'profoundly relational' and its goal to replace punitive, managerial structures of schooling with those that emphasize the building and repairing of relationships. (p. 64)

Therefore, the use of restorative approaches toward discipline enables relational engagement to solve issues rather than the use of behavioural controls to curb disciplinary problems. As a result, Watchel et al. (2010), as cited in Payne and Welch (2018), stated that ''human beings are

happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to or for them" (p. 226). Consequently, individuals are better able to foster and maintain relationships in a collaborative setting. Based on this context, Gardella 2015, as cited in Payne and Welch 2018, purported that restorative justice seeks to "build positive emotions, such as empathy and excitement, and rid the community of negative emotions, such as anger and humiliation" (p. 226). However, with punitive discipline, the focus is on punishment as opposed to relational engagement.

Hence, the relational use of restorative approaches enables educational institutions to balance justice in an equitable manner. For that reason:

> Restorative practices present schools with an opportunity to respectfully respond to students' inappropriate behavior, while offering an inclusive, educational, nonpunitive approach to make things right for everyone involved. In return, these methods improve school culture by promoting inclusion, community, self-efficacy, self-worth, and teach all involved strategies to resolve conflict and manage misbehavior in a peaceful manner. (Kline, 2016, p. 99)

Though Kline (2016) pointed out the positive effects of restorative justice approaches toward disciplinary issues, the dual nature of the approach was also highlighted. Thus, Kline (2016) was keen to point out that "restorative practices have a preventive, as well as a reactive component" (p. 99). However, "the preventive approach should be taught, emphasized, and exercised daily in schools" (Kline, 2016, p. 99). Therefore, in order for schools to take full advantage of restorative justice as a positive approach to student-related disciplinary issues, the key aspects of the model must be incorporated as a philosophy.

The use of restorative justice as a philosophical approach presents educational institutions with a positive alternative to eliminate disciplinary issues, create safe spaces and foster inclusion. Primarily:

> Restorative justice is about creating spaces where the pathway that defines a young person's life can be reopened through addressing the power and status imbalances that affect young people's lives, particularly in the aftermath of harmful behaviours such as bullying and other acts of violence. (Morrison, 2005, p. 30)

The claim that restorative justice creates safe spaces was also echoed by Gonzalez (2012):

> Restorative justice programs in school settings prioritize building school community capacity over punitive responses to behaviors to create safer environments. One of the goals of school-based restorative practice is for all individuals involved in a conflict, and those in the larger community, to recognize and understand the harmfulness of their behaviors and to prevent the reoccurrence of the behavior in the future. (p. 299)

Schools in Manitoba do have safety and inclusion as educational priorities (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017a, p. 3). Based on the theoretical model and supported research, restorative justice as an approach to student-related discipline can create safe spaces and foster inclusion based on its relational attributes.

Furthermore, the use of restorative justice in schools enables students and teachers to collaborate for the "purpose of goal-setting and mutual resolution" (Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018, p. 306). This type of student-teacher collaboration can be very effective in enabling students to maximize their academic capabilities. Additionally, Mansfield et. al. (2018) pointed out that:

> Using restorative approaches to discipline encourages the development of students' communication and leadership skills (Morris, 2016). Thus, RPs can potentially answer the call by scholars featured in *Educational Administration Quarterly* the past 15 years who urge practitioners and researchers to increase levels of student voice and shared leadership to (a) strengthen social justice leadership on the ground and (b) ensure more inclusive approaches to studying life in schools. (p. 306)

Therefore, the nature and use of restorative approaches in schools enhance students' wellbeing based on the relational strength-based model. This aspect of restorative justice is in keeping with Manitoba's philosophy of inclusion: "in Manitoba, we embrace inclusion as a means of enhancing the well-being of every member of the community. By working together [teacher-student collaboration], we strengthen our capacity to provide the foundation for a richer future for all of us" (Manitoba Education, 2011, p. 1).

Additionally, one of the biggest recommendations for the use of restorative justice as a disciplinary approach is its nature to eliminate exclusionary disciplinary measures. For instance, the Brandon School Division in Manitoba saw an increase in suspensions for the 2016 to 2017 academic year. "There were 239 suspensions from kindergarten to Grade 12 . . . up by 93 suspensions from the last year" (Debooy, 2017, para. 2). This meant that 239 students were excluded from the school environment, which denied them their educational right as outlined in section 259; subsection one of the Manitoba *PSA* (*PSA*, 1987, p. 239). In light of this context, the philosophical implementation and use of restorative justice have the potential to stem and eliminate exclusionary practices by preventing and addressing harm and building a positive school culture (Schiff, 2018, p. 122). Schiff (2018) further stated that:

> Punishments typically associated with zero tolerance tend to put students at greater risk for decreased connectivity to school, increased participation in risky or illegal behavior, poor academic achievement and dropout and, for many, subsequent entry into the 'school to prison pipeline'. (pp. 123 - 124)

However, Schiff (2018) also pointed out that restorative justice practice "reduces recidivism rates and increases positive relationships" (p. 126). Additionally, Schiff (2018) mentioned that "there is now considerable evidence that RJP [Restorative Justice Practice] can help reduce suspension and expulsion, decrease disciplinary referrals, improve academic achievement, and other positive results" (p. 126). Therefore, the positive attributes of restorative justice approach to discipline are more aligned with the statutory educational right as established in the Manitoba *PSA*.

Furthermore, the flexibility of a restorative justice approach enables it to transcend various borders in order to reach and benefit all students despite their socioeconomic statuses and backgrounds. For that reason, "restorative justice, with its philosophical foundation, holds potential for escaping this limitation of success as it relies on a relationship-based, dialogic framework that contrasts with the more common hierarchical, power-based structure" (Vaandering, 2014, p. 64). Thus, restorative justice creates an equitable space that does not seek to empower any individual, but through dialogue, foster relationships. Hence, the restorative justice approach may necessitate the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) techniques such as mediation (Department of Justice, 2016) and Circles of Courage to assist students based on their respective need or situation to foster dialogue and ultimately, relationships. As a result, restorative justice in this regard can foster inclusion based on the different ways in which the approach can be utilized.

## Mediation

Mediation is an aspect of restorative justice approaches that originated in the United States of America in the 1960's. However, the approach has been growing and has now spread to other countries including Canada, England and Australia, where the approach is practiced in a number of schools (Rigby, 2010, p. 58). In the context of schools and discipline, it may be viewed as a "reaction against traditional forms of intervention which seek to impose solutions to problems in an authoritative or authoritarian manner, rather than assist the [students] to find solutions for themselves" (Rigby, 2010, p. 58). Hence, mediation moves authority or power from teachers and principals, to students who were engaged in a conflict to reach an amicable solution. Accordingly, the process of mediation usually consists of an impartial mediator. The mediator may be a staff member or even students who have had some form of mediation training (Rigby, 2010, p. 58). Mediators are essential in order to facilitate the process and ensure that rules agreed upon are followed by both parties.

**Peer mediation.** Rigby (2010) states that students who are mediators, referred to as peer mediators, are often more advantageous to the mediation process than adults because "they do not generally come over as 'authority figures' and are less likely than teachers to impose their will on proceedings" (p. 58). Thus, peers enable disputing parties to have control over the outcome of the mediation process. Additionally:

> Schools are not just institutions designed for academic improvement but social evolution of children and youth. People mostly learn through their experiences. In this case, school's composition is very important as a primary social environment. Therefore, as Gauley (2006) said, social and emotional learning need to be incorporated and the students must be involved in the process actively. (Adiguzel, 2015, p. 827)

Hence, peers learning the necessary coping and problem-solving skills derived from mediation practices enable students to be independent. This independence further teaches students to manage conflicts in a responsible manner. With these life skills, communities and by extension the world can be impacted positively. Adiguzel (2015) further pointed out that peer mediation plays a vital role in reducing conflicts in schools, developing positive behaviours and supporting students' assertiveness in a democratic school environment. In addition, this student-based approach toward discipline can increase social harmony (p. 827).

It was also posited that the use of peer mediation is an "accepted student-centred intervention to respond to increasing student violence in schools. One of the reasons for this acceptance is the perceived ineffectiveness of adult-imposed models in warranting the desired positive change in students' behaviour" (Turnuklu, Kacmaz, Sunbul, & Ergul, 2010, p. 69). Therefore, it can be inferred that punitive and exclusionary disciplinary measures based on the claim made by Turnuklu, et. al., (2010) do not translate to good behaviour or safe and inclusive school environments. Additionally, the Turnuklu et. al. (2010) study concluded that "peer-mediation could also be useful in helping students acquire the necessary skills to manage their conflicts, thus, inoculating the young students for future more serious interpersonal conflicts" (p. 78). This finding was also confirmed in Adiguzel's (2015) study. Since mediation is a non-punitive measure, it is important for restorative justice to be incorporated as a philosophical approach in schools rather than a reactive measure. This philosophical approach is necessary to teach students empathy, coping and relational skills that are vital to the process of mediation. Though mediation can be a powerful restorative tool, the Circle of Courage process can be just as powerful and effective.

**Circle of Courage**

The Circle of Courage comes from Indigenous cultures where discipline was maintained without the use of "harsh coercive controls" (Manitoba Education and Training, n.d, p. 2). Articulated by Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern (2014), the Circle of Courage can be viewed with restorative lenses based on its focus on positive youth development. For this reason, the Circle of Courage focuses on four dimensions; Belonging, Mastery, Independence and Generosity (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2014, p. 12). These four Circle of Courage dimensions are derived from "the traditions and practices of cultures that deeply cherished children and treated them with respect and dignity" (Van Bockern & McDonald, 2012, p. 13). Thus, these four Circle of Courage features can be seen as growth needs for all students. This claim was supported in Van Bockern (2014) where it was stated that "these four essential birthrights are actually growth needs, and transcend time and culture. When met, our kids tend to do well" (p. 15). Therefore, the Circle of Courage is a strength-based model that caters to the four growth needs of students through relational engagements. The relational context is a prime feature of restorative justice approaches that can be geared toward eliminating disciplinary issues in schools. Hence, the four relational features of the Circle of Courage can also be collaboratively utilized to stem disciplinary issues in schools in a positive and inclusive manner.

**Belonging.** It is important that students have a sense of belonging or connection in the school environment. A lot of time is spent by students at school, and as result, students should never feel unwelcome or alienated. In cases where "relationships are damaged, floods of painful emotions signal those affected to restore social bonds. Those without a sense of Belonging may find themselves craving attention, engaging in risky . . . behaviors, or joining a gang to meet the need for connections" (Brendtro, Mitchell, & Jackson, 2014, p. 10). In a similar manner, students

who are excluded from the school environment as a disciplinary measure may become involved in more delinquent activities because they feel alienated and not belonging. Brendtro et. al., (2014) further stated that "when Belonging is experienced . . ., life is fulfilling and fun. One can trust others, be trusted in return, and feel pride and acceptance" (p. 10). Thus, schools are to provide students with this belongingness. This belongingness translates to a school that is "safe and secure" and a school that "connects children in positive relationships with healthy, loving adults and other youth" (Van Bockern & McDonald, 2012, p. 16).

**Mastery.** Mastery and Belonging are inextricably linked, because students "learn in relationship with others" (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2014, p. 12). Therefore, through relationships "those whose needs for achievement are met can develop talents and the ability to solve problems" (Brendtro, Mitchell, & Jackson, 2014, p. 10). Hence, Mastery infers that schools ought to meet the needs of all students without excluding or alienating them from the school environment. Additionally, the problem-solving techniques derived from relational achievement are vital skills that can be utilized by students to diffuse or eliminate potential conflicts. Therefore, Mastery highlights the need for schools to ensure that students experience success (Van Bockern & McDonald, 2012, p. 16). Hence, success is recognized as the ability to foster healthy relationships from which academic growth is realized.

**Independence.** Independence focuses on the ability of students to control their emotions and be responsible (Brendtro, Mitchell, & Jackson, 2014, p. 11). The "Independence indicators include students given choices and learning self-regulating behavior" (Van Bockern, 2014, p. 16). However, this self-regulating behaviour is promoted through teaching and not punishment (Van Bockern & McDonald, 2012, p. 16). Thus, the teaching enables students to grow in self-regulation where they develop skills to cope with challenges (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van

Bockern, 2014, p. 12). It is logical that punishment to include exclusionary disciplinary measures does not equip students with this kind of autonomy. These negative types of punishment only permit students to rely on the disciplinary consequences imposed by schools for violating rules. For that reason, students who are "in charge of their lives can control their emotions and make good decisions—the definition of responsibility. But if these strengths are underdeveloped, some may find themselves spinning out of control. They have difficulty managing impulses and take reckless chances" (Brendtro, Mitchell, & Jackson, 2014, p. 11). Hence, there is no desire for students to take responsibility for their emotions or behaviour because they are in an environment where emotions and/or behaviour are controlled. Therefore, schools should meet the Independence need of each student by providing positive ways of growth rather than trying to use punishment to instil discipline.

**Generosity.** The notion of Generosity is closely tied to the other Circle of Courage pillars. Students who feel belonging will demonstrate levels of care, altruistic behaviour and empathy toward other students and staff members (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2014, p. 12). Mastery enables students to learn problem-solving techniques and develop their academic capabilities through relationships. Independence equips students with the necessary self-regulating skills to manage their emotions and behaviour in order to make good decisions. Therefore, collaboratively, these characteristics give students the opportunity to become resilient. Students who are resilient may become concerned about others' well-being and thus, they are better able to apply the features of Generosity in problematic situations.

Based on the literature, mediation and the Circle of Courage share similar characteristics. Emphases are placed on relationships to include a sense of belonging, empathy and care, autonomy, and mastery of problem-solving skills that are vital to stem deviant behaviour in

schools. The literature demonstrated that punitive measures have not eradicated disciplinary challenges and therefore, there is the need for positive, student-centred approaches to discipline that can enable students to become resilient, caring and understanding. These characteristics are essential in creating a safe and inclusive school environment where students can achieve their full potential. Nonetheless, in order to present a firm case for restorative justice approaches in schools, the role of the administrator must be considered.

## The School Administrator in the Context of Restorative Justice

Administrators play an important role in the operation of schools and effective leadership is constantly evolving to address new challenges that the school may encounter. Addressing discipline is an issue that requires school leaders to be flexible and collaborative. The literature has demonstrated that approaches to school-related disciplinary issues have been changing over the years. Though this might have been at a slow pace, they are nonetheless being changed from punitive to more positive approaches. The use of restorative practices in schools is relatively new but some schools are trying to incorporate these approaches with the hope of achieving better results. However, the administrator‘s position and management of restorative justice practices as a disciplinary approach are vital to its success.

According to Watchel et al. (as cited in Payne & Welch, 2018), the underlying thesis of the restorative approach to discipline is that “human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to or for them” (p. 226). Thus, administrators must ensure that their leadership approach to discipline is changed. For this reason, there must be a paradigm shift from the traditional approach, where administrators control and administer discipline with the objective of improving students’ behaviour *for* them. This sentiment was also

elucidated in Payne and Welch (2015) where they cautioned that "the implementation of a true restorative model of discipline requires a fundamental paradigm shift that addresses not just discipline but the entire school climate and community as well" (p. 541). Furthermore, Payne and Welch (2015) also purported that there must be a shift from "authoritarian and punitive to democratic and responsive" (p. 541). Therefore, the restorative model requires a decentralization of power to ensure that students become a part of the process and thereby fostering collaboration and relationships.

The decentralization of power that is required is two-tiered and is necessary for the effective use of restorative justice. Firstly, the reality that administrators are viewed as judges in the final court regarding discipline must be changed. As a result, administrators must be willing to relinquish traditional control over disciplinary issues. However, there are notable tensions from the *PSA and EAA* that legally empower administrators to use traditional approaches such as suspension to maintain discipline. For this reason, there must be a shift from the punitive and exclusionary approach that is often taken, to positive responses that are consistent with education's goals of supporting teaching and learning (Restorative School, n.d., p. 5). Therefore, the habit of school administrators controlling students' behaviour through punitive and exclusionary means requires the understanding that utilizing restorative justice as a response to disciplinary issues is different from behaviour modification. Unlike behaviour modification, restorative justice emphasizes relationships that are derived from interactions. Subsequently:

> This means that it is not a bottom-up approach that emphasizes descriptions of acceptable and unacceptable behavior within deficit intervention frameworks. Nor is it top-down in asserting school rules set by the administration whereby violations are viewed as transgressions against rules. Instead, restorative school discipline is people focused,

> accepting that positive and supportive relationships are crucial for learning to occur in educational environments so that conflict must be addressed by making amends where relationships will otherwise be damaged and even broken. (Restorative School, n.d., p. 7)

Secondly, school leadership requires a collaborative and shared approach to effectively reap the benefits of restorative justice as a disciplinary strategy. For this reason, the distributed leadership style gives administrators the flexibility to include staff members in the decision-making process (Harris, 2013, p. 545). Hence, "the model shares the burdensome workload of the principal among staff members to ensure the smooth and effective operation of the school in order to successfully achieve its objectives" (Thompson, 2016). As a result of this shared control, school administrators would be better poised to successfully incorporate staff members to advance restorative justice as a philosophical approach to discipline. Therefore, the distributed model decentralizes power by requiring "substantial participation" and rejects the notion of the "lonely instructional leader" (Wright, 2008, p. 8).

Additionally, the distributed leadership style can be beneficial to students within the restorative justice context based on the varying backgrounds or diversity of staff members. This diversity is able to shape restorative justice school policies or guidelines based on the varying perspectives of staff members. As a result, the distributed leadership model encourages "multiple and distributed sources of leadership that stretch over social and situational context" (Liang & Sandmann, 2015, p. 38), with the potential to make educational institutions an inclusive space where every child can develop academically regardless of physical challenges, creed, race, gender and/or ethnicity. Therefore, it is logical that the distributed leadership style fits well within the ambits of social justice which is also important to the effective utilization of restorative justice practices in school.

Similarly, critical to the effectiveness of restorative justice in schools is the main attribute of social justice leadership. The onus is on administrators to ensure that the restorative process is equitable despite race, creed, gender, disabilities and/or the socioeconomic statuses of students. This claim can be supported by Theoharis (2007), in which he defines social justice leadership to mean "principals [who] make issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions . . . central to their advocacy, leadership practice, and vision. This definition centers on addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools" (p. 223). Therefore:

> The practice of social justice leadership begins with an awareness of inequities and unequal circumstances confronted by marginalized groups and a leadership orientation fixated on addressing these inequities. Although social justice itself means many things to many people, most scholars agree that social justice is attentive to equitable distribution of resources, recognition, and the opportunity to make decisions that impact one's life. (DeMatthews, 2016, p. 8)

Hence, administrators have the responsibility to ensure that the school leadership is also responsive to restorative approaches that may often require discretion based on the students who may be involved in the process at any given time. Thus, the notion that one size fits all does not suit the restorative process.

Furthermore, school administrators utilize exclusionary measures because of the "get tough approach" on misbehaviour at school. This tough approach has been "ingrained" in the school's culture and therefore, there must be a shift from this tough culture to reap the benefits of restorative justice practices (Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018, p. 304). Though there is not existing literature pointing toward administrators changing the school culture to accommodate

restorative justice, it is quite logical that this must be done to foster the shift from punitive to positive disciplinary approaches. For this reason, Gonsoulin, Zablocki and Leone (2012) posited that one of the best avenues for administrators to shift a school culture from exclusionary and punitive disciplinary measures to positive ones is via the development of effective professional learning communities (p. 311).

Gonsoulin et al., (2012) clearly defined and described the manner in which professional learning communities can be beneficial to positive school disciplinary transformation. Hence:

> Professional learning communities are conceptualized as a collaborative effort wherein teachers engage in continuous dialogue and examination of their practice and student performance to develop and enact more effective instructional practices (Wei et al., 2009). In addition, professional learning communities include ongoing opportunities for collegial work, while providing teachers with the opportunity to learn about, tryout, and reflect on new practices in their specific context, and then sharing their individual knowledge and expertise. Ultimately, the goals of the professional learning communities are aligned with those of the school and school district. (p. 311)

Similarly, the operational context of professional learning communities (Gonsoulin et al., 2012) can be adapted to the shift from exclusionary and punitive practices to restorative justice practices in schools. Through professional learning communities, school administrators are able to develop a strength-based model that can foster the shift from punitive and exclusionary measures to restorative justice practices. The learning communities are poised to enable collegial work, relational support and understanding that are necessary to change the traditional approach taken to discipline. As a result, the professional learning communities can provide the platform from which restorative justice as a positive approach to discipline can be launched within

schools. It presents staff members with the opportunity to gradually assimilate from the traditional disciplinary approaches to contemporary and positive ones through shared knowledge and expertise within the communities.

However, administrators must be cognizant of the fact that the implementation of restorative justice within educational institutions requires a holistic approach. There are different stages of restorative implementation for the process to be effective and thus, it should never be used as a kneejerk disciplinary measure. Effective implementation can take three to five years in order to cover the requisite bases such as changing the educational culture, the use of restorative practices, and to include critical stakeholders such as parents and community groups (National Center, 2009, p. 1). In a similar manner, McCluskey et al. (2008) pointed out that "the key features associated with successful implementation, in . . . primary and secondary schools, included readiness for change, and also balance of clarity and flexibility about identification of aims. This was . . . often associated with good quality training and leadership" (p. 412). Hence, administrators must first appreciate the need for change and through carefully planned collaborative training sessions try to get staff members on board.

McCluskey et al. (2008) also found in their research that effective restorative training can result in a change in staff morale with respect to restorative justice as a new approach to discipline. The findings revealed that "in one secondary school, for example, the deputy headteacher was initially s[k]eptical but then attended a training course and, came away convinced, fully convinced, absolutely fully convinced that this was a very powerful tool'' (p. 413). Furthermore, it was clear based on McCluskey et al.'s (2008) finding that students recognized the difference in using restorative justice practices as an approach to discipline.

Students felt that restorative practices "had led to teachers 'not shouting', 'listening to both sides' and '[making] everyone feel equal'" (p. 412). Subsequently, it was logical that students "value a fair hearing, one of the central tenets of [the] restorative approach" (McCluskey et al., 2008, p. 413).

Therefore, school leadership must appreciate the restorative philosophy before trying to engage students and/or partner with different stakeholders such as the parents. Subsequently, administrators must acknowledge that the implementation of restorative justice within the school context as a disciplinary measure does not equate to effectiveness. As a result, the implementation stages must consider factors that may challenge or prevent the effective use of restorative justice in schools based on cultural practices and thereafter, provide the requisite training to prevent challenges from making the restorative approach ineffective.

Furthermore, administrators must ensure that training is ongoing and direct the school in a path that does not seek to reinforce "an agenda of compliance and control [but] rather . . . its intended purpose of building relational, interconnected and interdependent school cultures" (Vaandering, 2014, p. 65). For this reason, administrators must see to it that restorative justice practices are implemented as a whole-school approach. The whole-school approach uses "RJP [restorative justice practices] to build culture and climate based on mutually agreed upon restorative values of respect, trust, inclusion, tolerance, understanding (and more) which, when applied consistently and with fidelity, can result in fewer incidents of harm overall" (Schiff, 2018, p. 125). This type of approach also fits perfectly with the philosophy of inclusion for Manitoba's schools. The philosophy states that:

> Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing

> needs of its members. Through recognition and support, an inclusive community provides meaningful involvement and equal access to the benefits of citizenship. (Manitoba Education, 2011, p.1)

Therefore, schools in Manitoba should endeavour to meet the educational needs of all students despite behavioural concerns. For this reason, inclusion signifies equal access to education through the requisite resources that can support students to be successful.

However, Schiff (2018) also pointed out that administrators must be cautioned against insufficient training in restorative justice:

> [Staff members] may not be comfortable with either the subject matter or the methods recommended by trainers or in curriculum materials, and may feel themselves working against an entrenched culture where this is perceived as a 'soft' response to student misbehavior and rules violations. While RJP are currently a 'sexy' alternative to exclusionary discipline policy, many districts are unwilling to commit the resources necessary to implement with fidelity. Some districts are willing to invest in one or two trainings, but not necessarily to the complex multi-year process of redefining behavior, reestablishing culture, confronting long held responses to rules violations – or even to reconsidering the rules themselves. (Schiff, 2018, p. 130)

Consequently, school administrators must ensure that the restorative disciplinary vision is supported by their respective divisions in order to secure the requisite holistic support to ensure sustained engagement and thereby, its effectiveness.

In this chapter, I sought to provide a history of Canadian school-related discipline. Traditional and punitive approaches to discipline were reviewed to give a better understanding of the need to utilize positive disciplinary approaches. The case for positive disciplinary approaches

was strengthened based on the legal implications that surround traditional and punitive approaches. Thereafter, the progressive disciplinary model was discussed as an alternative to traditional and punitive approaches. However, the literature pointed to a number of shortcomings that are associated with the progressive model and further demonstrated that the model is utilized in a punitive manner. Therefore, there was the need to explore positive approaches.

For this reason, I examined restorative justice as a positive approach to discipline. Within the context of restorative justice, mediation and Circles of Courage were discussed. Mediation and circles of courage were selected because of their relational component and operative contexts that are able to withstand traditional and punitive forms of interventions. Hence, these two positive methods of discipline enable students to be active participants in finding solutions to problems and thus facilitating a transition from an authoritarian to a democratic disciplinary context. Nonetheless, in order to cement the notion of restorative justice as a positive and effective approach, the role of the administrator was also examined in the final part of this chapter.

Chapter Two also gave me a better understanding of the current need to implement and utilize positive measures toward discipline in schools. The literature demonstrated that traditional measures such as corporal punishment and exclusionary approaches have not reduced or eliminated disciplinary issues in schools. These traditional measures are used as a means of driving fear in students with the hope of controlling behaviour. The literature pointed out that these measures are ineffective based on legal implications, the correlation with low academic achievement, high recidivism rates, and the likelihood of transitioning students from schools to prisons to cite a few examples. However, the literature also demonstrated that the reverse effects of traditional approaches are possible with positive measures.

Restorative justice was the positive approach explored in this chapter. It was captured as an alternative response to traditional approaches based on its nature to: develop safe and caring school cultures and foster relational engagement as opposed to behavioural control. Hence, the approach gives students a sense of belonging, empathy and care, encourages the development of students' communication and leadership skills, transcends socio-economic status and backgrounds to increase connectivity, lowers participation in risky or illegal behaviour and aids students' overall success and academic achievement, to cite a few examples. Though the literature pointed out the positive effects of restorative justice as an approach to discipline, there was a caution regarding its use. For this reason, restorative justice should not be used as a preventative measure but rather a philosophical approach toward discipline to reap the positive effects of the model. Hence, the literature provided clarity as it relates to the concept of restorative justice, the disciplinary benefits and to some extent, the implementation process.

Nonetheless, a gap in the literature was identified. There was no available literature pointing toward school administrators' experiences regarding the paradigm shift from punitive to restorative disciplinary measures. This literature would have been helpful to administrators as it relates to restorative justice or positive discipline implementation strategies and policy formation. It is for this reason that I intend to study how school leaders' experience the paradigm shift from punitive to positive discipline (restorative justice). Additionally, the influence of federal and provincial laws will also be examined in light of school leaders' shift. In a similar manner, there is no specific literature that connects educational restorative justice or positive disciplinary practices to laws. Therefore, this research will seek to address these two gaps by contributing to the literature in this regard. In the next chapter, I will demonstrate how the

research methodology is connected to the literature and identify the theoretical framework used in answering the research question.

# Chapter Three: Methodology

In this chapter, I present a number of sections that were relevant to answering the research questions. The research questions that guided this study were:

a. How do school leaders experience a shift in paradigm from punitive to positive school-based discipline?

b. How might federal and provincial laws influence school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline?

Firstly, I present the research methodology and design. Thereafter, I demonstrate how the research paradigm is connected to the topic under investigation. Additionally, the research methods, questions, assumptions and procedure used for collecting the data will be discussed. Critical to the data collection was the sample. Both the sample and sampling technique will be presented. Furthermore, I will discuss the data analysis methods as well as ethical considerations and any perceived ethical concerns. Finally, the validity, reliability, and limitations will be discussed.

## Qualitative Research Methodology and Design

A qualitative methodology was used because of the nature of the research questions. Qualitative research is "a form of social action that stresses on the way people interpret, and make sense of their experiences to understand the social reality of individuals" (Haradhan, 2018, p. 24). Furthermore, Haradhan (2018) postulated that qualitative research is:

> Exploratory, and seeks to explain 'how' and 'why' a particular social phenomenon, or program, operates as it does in a particular context. It tries to help us to understand the social world in which we live, and why things are the way they are. (p. 24)

This approach enabled me to generate the most relevant and useful data from research participants, as well as interpreting these data in answering my research questions. For this reason, the qualitative design provided the most suitable descriptions based on school leaders' experiences.

Additionally, as a researcher, I was interested in educators' beliefs about positive discipline, and their experiences with positive disciplinary approaches and Canadian laws. The qualitative research methodology enabled me to obtain this relevant information since the "purpose of qualitative research is to describe and interpret issues or phenomena systematically from the point of view of the individual or population being studied, and to generate new concepts and theories" (Haradhan, 2018, p. 24) to answer the research questions. Remler and Van Ryzin (2015) define research methods as the "techniques and procedures that produce research evidence" (p. 568). Accordingly, through the qualitative research approach, I examined the effectiveness of positive discipline in Manitoba schools by focusing on school leaders' experiences in shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline, as well as the influence of Canadian laws on such a shift.

For this reason, I used the qualitative approach to gain a better understanding of the contexts or settings (Creswell, 2007, p. 40) in which school leaders address the issue of shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline. After reviewing several works of literature about the topic (Creswell, 2007, p. 42), and finding nothing in the literature that documented or described school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline, I arrived at the qualitative approach as the more suitable method to capture the experiences of school leaders. As a result, the qualitative approach enabled me to immerse myself in the research field to obtain valuable data based on each participant's subjective reality concerning the phenomenon. This in-

depth nature of the qualitative process further enabled me to put aside any perceived notions that I had regarding the topic and give the participants the opportunity to describe their experiences with the phenomenon. Therefore, I visited the research sites as much as possible to conduct interviews and review policy documents.

## Research Paradigm

The research paradigm that captures my multi-approach to unearthing the truth is the pragmatist or realist approach. Kuhn (as cited in Gokturk, n.d.) postulated the notion that a paradigm is "what we observe the world through" (pp. 6 - 7). This seems quite logical because people's epistemology is basically shaped by their realities or experiences. It is my view that there is no set way to build upon one's epistemological framework because reality is not constant, it is ever-changing (Thompson, 2017). This belief was also echoed in Krauss (2005):

> Qualitative researchers . . . do not assume that there is a single unitary reality apart from our perceptions. Since each of us experiences from our own point of view, each of us experiences a different reality. As such, the phenomenon of "multiple realities" exists. (p. 760)

Therefore, it is only rational that approaches to knowing are changed based on one's perception of reality. For this reason, the most appropriate approach to utilize should be based on the reality being studied.

Accordingly, as a pragmatist, I refuse to be a part of the "paradigm war" (Wahyuni, 2012, p. 71) because I do not believe that one size fits all, that is, one specific research paradigm is not always able to generate or add to knowledge based on varying realities (Thompson, 2017). Hence:

> Instead of questioning ontology and epistemology as the first step, pragmatist supporters start off with the research question to determine their research framework. They emphasize that one should view research philosophy as a continuum, rather than an option that stands in opposite positions . . . Hence, a mixture of ontology, epistemology and axiology is acceptable to approach and understand social phenomena. Here, the emphasis is on what works best to address the research problem at hand. (Wahyuni, 2012, p. 71)

As a result, it was my view that the most appropriate paradigm to unearth knowledge regarding my study was the phenomenology theory. This theory was selected because it prioritized the subjective experiences of participants and "seek[s] to carefully describe and explain the flow of consciousness" (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2015, p. 63) regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Additionally, the phenomenological approach was utilized because it has been "adopted by many qualitative researchers as a way to understand the social world" (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2015, p. 63) through participants' subjective realities. In a similar manner, I wanted to understand school leaders' experience in transitioning from punitive to positive school-based discipline in Manitoba. These experiences will further add to literature providing educators with knowledge of such transition that can be used to inform practices and/or policies.

## Phenomenological Theoretical Paradigm

The phenomenological theoretical paradigm was used to describe school leaders' experience in shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline in Manitoba. The term phenomenology was utilized as early as 1765 and in Kant's writing, however, Hegel was the one who put forward an initial definition (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). Subsequently, Hegel pointed out that phenomenology refers to:

> Knowledge as it appears to consciousness, the science of describing what one perceives, senses, and knows in one's immediate awareness and experience. The process leads to an unfolding of phenomenal consciousness through science and philosophy "toward the absolute knowledge of the Absolute". (Cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 26)

However, according to Husserl, one of the phenomenological theorists, phenomenology is a "pure, non-empirical discipline that "lays bare the 'sources' from which the basic concepts and ideal laws of pure logic 'flow' . . ." (Cerbone, 2006, pp. 11- 12). For this reason, phenomenology is the conscious reality as experienced by individuals. Also, Husserl posited that "phenomenology is to proceed without the aid of any unexamined assumptions; phenomenology is to be a 'presuppositionless' form of enquiry" (Cerbone, 2006, p. 12). Hence, the need for bracketing that will enable researchers to arrive at the truth regarding a phenomenon.

Therefore, a collective understanding of phenomenology based on the definitions proposed by Hegel and Husserl was obtained. Phenomenology is based on consciousness and not empirical things. It describes the real-life experiences of persons experiencing a phenomenon, through bracketing to create knowledge. The collective understanding of the term was also reiterated in Merleau-Ponty and Bannan's (1956) work where phenomenology was viewed as a qualitative approach that describes how individuals experience a particular phenomenon, and therefore, it is not directly related to explanations and/or analysis of those experiences but rather related to rich descriptions that make the experiences understandable (p. 60).

The creation of knowledge through the phenomenological framework is done via the three core stages; Epoche, Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction, and Imaginative Variation (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). The Epoche is "a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgment, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things"

(Moustakas, 1994, p. 33) and therefore, as a researcher, I must try to bracket my experiences. This bracketing, as put forward by Husserl, is necessary to view each phenomenon from a new vantage point (Cerbone, 2006, p. 22). Accordingly, I should attend to each person's description of their experiences and their ways of knowing about the phenomenon.

The Epoche is a necessary and fundamental stage that must be performed in order to reach the Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction stage (Cerbone, 2006, p. 22). For this reason:

> It is called transcendental because it moves beyond the everyday to the pure ego in which everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time. "It is called 'phenomenological' because it transforms the world into mere phenomena. It is called 'reduction' because it leads us back (Lat. *reducere*) to the source of the meaning and existence of the experienced world" (Schmitt, 1967, p. 61). (Cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 34)

Subsequently, this stage enables researchers to approach each experience of the phenomenon by bracketing previous experiences to enable consciousness to flow freely to gain better descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation. From Husserl's viewpoint, reduction means going back, and accordingly, the researcher continues to probe the specific phenomenon until saturation takes place in order to obtain complete descriptions regarding the phenomenon. Thus, reduction, as proposed by Husserl, is to "make research findings more precise" (Giorgi, 1997, para. 12). Hence, Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction aids researchers in arriving at a "textual description of meanings and essences of the phenomenon . . . from the vantage point of an open self" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34) in order to gain the truth of these experiences.

The final stage, the Imaginative Variation, approaches the phenomenon from different perspectives and roles to "seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination"

(Moustakas, 1994, p.97). Based on Husserl's expectation, at this stage, researchers are to construct themes based on descriptions after saturation has occurred in stage two. For this reason, the Imaginative Variation stage is what I would refer to as the imaginative-reflection stage. It requires a deep understanding of the experiences by the researcher. This understanding of the experience can only be realized through the submerging of the researcher's own consciousness to enable those of the 'experiencers' to flow and thereby arriving at themes that are connected to descriptions. Therefore, researchers must be "awakened" by being attuned to the varying subjectivities as they venture out into the unknown. Hence, researchers should become curious and furious in order to awaken possibilities (Wide-Awakeness, 2008, para. 2).

The core stages are culminated in what Husserl describes as the synthesis. The synthesis is an "integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100). These essences are derived from an intersubjective experience between the researcher and the 'experiencer' to unearth knowledge and thereby give readers an understanding of what it would be like to experience the phenomenon. However, "the essences of any experience are never totally exhausted" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100) and are specific to the researcher and experiencer at a particular time and place.

## Research Context

The research focused on the experience of Manitoba administrators in shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline. As a result, I studied the experiences of three administrators relating to shifting from punitive and exclusionary discipline to positive discipline. Additionally, I obtained experiences about school administrators' shift from punitive to positive discipline from a teacher, Behaviour Consultant, and law enforcement/peace officer.

These individuals work closely with the phenomenon and were interviewed for the purpose of triangulating the data. For this reason, individuals with lived experiences of the phenomenon of interest participated in the research. Therefore, the focus was on administrators currently utilizing positive disciplinary practices to describe their experiences.

## Researcher's Position

I taught at a Jamaican high school for seven years in the Language and Social Studies Departments and am aware of the negative implications of punitive and exclusionary discipline. Also, I had experience with punitive discipline. Though I am familiar with specific issues relating to punitive and exclusionary disciplinary practices as well as theoretical advantages of positive disciplinary methods, I have no prior experience with the use of the latter methods. Therefore, investigating this phenomenon should minimize my subjectivity on the research descriptions and findings because of the lack of transitional experience from punitive to positive school-based disciplinary approaches. As a result, I put aside any prior experience whenever visiting a research site to obtain experiences. Reduction, as proposed by Husserl continued until enough data relating to the phenomenon were obtained. Hence, I was an outsider but a complete participant throughout the investigation process. I only visited research sites for the purpose of data collection.

## Data Collection Sources

The phenomenological approach was used to obtain the personal experiences of three school administrators, a teacher, Behaviour Consultant, and law enforcement/peace officer in Manitoba. The main source of information derived from in-depth interviews but the viewing of artefacts was utilized whenever possible. In this manner, the subjective reality of the three administrators, one teacher, one Behaviour Consultant, and one law enforcement/peace officer

was collected. From these experiences, rich descriptions were drawn regarding school leaders' transition from punitive to positive school-based discipline. Based on these descriptions, I came up with the I-RISE disciplinary model to assist school leaders as they journey from punitive to positive school-based discipline.

**Interviews**

Interviewees were purposively selected based on the phenomenon under investigation. The rationale behind using the purposive sampling technique was that elements for the sample were selected by "using a sound judgment which will result in saving time and money" (Dudovskiy, 2016, para. 2). Furthermore, the shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline is a new step for schools in Manitoba. Therefore, there were a limited number of administrators "who can serve as primary data sources" (Dudovskiy, 2016, para. 4) based on information received from school policies. As a result, the purposive sampling method was appropriate and effective in retrieving data about the phenomenon. Following ethics approval (Appendix A), I sought and obtained permission from School Division Superintendents and Supervisors of law enforcement officers (Appendix B, C, D, and E). Once permission was obtained, an invitation was sent to several school administrators and law enforcement officers based on a perceived connection with the phenomenon. Quite a few administrators initially indicated interest and communication was initiated (Appendix F) but only three were willing to participate in the study. Before the interviews, I sought and received the necessary permissions for carrying out the data collection from school leaders, academic and non-academic staff, and law enforcement officers. I sent each participant a letter that comprised of an introduction, the purpose of the research, the procedure of data collection, benefits and any perceived risk of the

research, statements regarding confidentiality and anonymity, and an informed consent form (Appendix G, H, I, J, K, and L).

After the epoche process was completed, that is, "a way of creating an atmosphere and rapport for conducting the interview" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 181), I conducted several in-depth interviews. I am not claiming saturation, but I felt that the data gathered were adequate to answer the research questions. I was convinced that the data was adequate from receiving similar information from participants in different sessions. To obtain the valuable data, I visited the research sites based on agreed times and dates set by each participant to probe the participants' respective experience. Accordingly, informal interviews were utilized. For this reason, there were no structured questions or interview guide for participants. However, there were a few initial questions that are attached in the Appendices (Appendix M, N, and O). These open-ended questions were probes based on responses regarding the respective realities to find out more about the participants' experiences. Each interview session was recorded for the purpose of transcription and to accurately answer the research question.

## Background of Participants

Three school leaders or administrators participated in this study. Additionally, one teacher, one Behaviour Consultant and one law enforcement/peace officer participated in the study as well. The six participants had experience with the phenomenon being investigated.

### School Leader One

School Leader One has been an elementary school administrator for 12 years in Manitoba. Before being an administrator, School Leader One taught for approximately 14 years and about three of those years were outside the province of Manitoba. This teaching career was spent in five schools that included First Nation schools and the school that he now leads. School Leader

One has a four-year Bachelor of Education degree, Graduate Diploma in Education and a Master of Education degree, all from the same university in Manitoba.

**Teacher One**

Teacher One has been teaching for 14 years in Manitoba. Teacher One has an Arts and Education degree from the same university in Manitoba. Teacher One is a staff member in the school where School Leader One is the school administrator. Teacher One also has a specialized role at the elementary school.

**School Leader Two**

School Leader Two has been in school administration for 20 years. During this time, School Leader Two spent four years as the vice-principal and seven years as principal at the same elementary school in Manitoba. Subsequently, School Leader Two became the leader of a high school in Manitoba and this is School Leader Two's ninth year as principal. School Leader Two has a four-year Bachelor of Education degree, a Graduate Diploma, and a master's degree in Educational Administration, all from the same university in Manitoba.

**School Leader Three**

School Leader Three has been a high school administrator for 18 years in Manitoba. Three of the 18 years were spent as a vice-principal. Before becoming an administrator, School Leader Three spent 16 years teaching in Manitoba. School Leader Three has a Bachelor of Arts and Education degree, all from the same university in Manitoba.

**Peace Officer One**

Peace Officer One is a law enforcement officer in Manitoba. Peace Officer One has been in law enforcement for 10 years and worked in several areas. One of those areas included working with

community youth groups in the province. Additionally, Peace Officer One has been working closely with schools in Manitoba since 2018.

**Behaviour Consultant One**

Behaviour Consultant One worked in a treatment foster care programme and in that capacity began working with schools in Manitoba. Behaviour Consultant One also worked with Child and Family Services (CFS) in Manitoba as a frontline worker and fostered children. Behaviour Consultant One's CFS role then shifted to a Child Welfare Worker that was based in a school. Behaviour Consultant One worked in that programme from 1993 to 1996. Following that, Behaviour Consultant One worked for a school division in Manitoba from 1999 to 2014 and during that time, Behaviour Consultant One also worked for one year as a Guidance Counsellor. Additionally, Behaviour Consultant One does restitution training in several school divisions. Behaviour Consultant One has a Bachelor of Social Work and a Master of Education degree from universities in Manitoba and is also certified in Control Theory and Restitution.

## Data Analysis Methods

I transcribed the interviews and thereafter analyzed the data based on the modification of van Kaam's (1959 & 1966) phenomenological process. Subsequently, I initiated the horizontalization process by taking relevant statements from the transcripts that describe the phenomenon. Statements containing "overlapping, repetitive and vague expressions" were observed and eliminated or "presented in more exact descriptive terms" (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 120 & 121). Thereafter, statements were then grouped or placed in clusters based on themes relating to the experiences of the participants. NVivo software was used in this regard, but only to organize clusters and themes. Following clusters and themes, individual textural descriptions of what each participant experienced was written. These descriptions were supported by

"verbatim examples from the transcribed interview" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121) in order to understand each participant's unique experience of the phenomenon. Next, a structural description of the experiences was written based on the individual textural descriptions. At this stage, the imaginative variation as described by Husserl was applied. As a result, approaches to the phenomenon from different perspectives and roles will be used to obtain possible meanings via imaginative-reflection (Moustakas, 1994, p. 97). Finally, the textural and structural descriptions were used to write the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121) based on school leaders' shift from punitive to positive discipline and the influence of laws on that shift. The textural and structural description should give readers the understanding of what it would be like to experience the phenomenon.

## Validity and Trustworthiness

This study was of a qualitative and phenomenological nature; therefore, validity and trustworthiness are concerned with the accuracy of the research account. As the researcher, I ensured that extensive time was spent at research sites collecting data that was needed to answer the research questions. Additionally, as a "beginning student of qualitative research", I utilized only the phenomenological approach to ensure that I was comfortable in applying the methods of data collection and analyses to present the most accurate account of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2007, p.45). Furthermore, member checking was also utilized to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of data (Creswell, 2007, p. 47). For this reason, participants were able to check their respective interview transcripts for accuracy and to remove information or provide any additional information that they may deem suitable with regards to their subjective experiences. Similarly, participants gave feedback on the I-RISE model and this feedback was included in the respective interview transcript for member checking. Participants were emailed

transcripts for the purpose of verification and/or adding information. Additionally, school leaders' experiences were juxtaposed to those of the teacher, Behaviour Consultant, and law enforcement/peace officer who worked closely with the phenomenon.

## Limitations of the Research

This study is of a phenomenological qualitative design. Given this context, the research is based on the participants' individual experiences and the findings may not be generalizable. The research was limited to a small sample of school leaders, academic, and non-academic staff in a small geographical region of Manitoba who have experience with the phenomenon studied. As a result of this small sample, the data may not represent the experiences of other school leaders or associated personnel in Manitoba schools. The data sources were limited as interviews were the main source of data collection for the study, and data collection ended prematurely with one school leader as a result of availability. Furthermore, the interviews are based on self-report which can be filtered and fallible. Additionally, some school leaders who consented to participate in the research did not give permission to contact academic and non-academic staff. This reduced the potential for different perspectives on the shift from punitive to positive discipline in one context. Based on the qualitative nature of the research, my own biases will have influenced my analysis of the data, despite deliberate efforts to bracket personal thoughts.

## Ethical Considerations

I understand that any research involving humans must respect each participant individually (Creswell, 2007, p. 44). Based on this premise, I protected each participant from any perceived harm by acting ethically at all times in the participant's best interest (Tri-Council Policy Statement, 2005, p. i.5). A thorough description of the research was given to each participant which included the benefits and any perceived risks of the research. Thereafter, free

and informed consent was sought from each participant before the commencement of the research (Tri-Council Policy Statement, 2005, p. i.5). Participants were also reminded that they can withdraw their consent at any stage of the research process.

Furthermore, the participants' information was kept private and confidential. Therefore, interviews conducted with participants were not discussed with anyone. Additionally, the recorded interviews were kept in a safe place that was not accessible to anyone but the researcher. Following interviews, data transcribed were stored on my laptop and the files were protected using passwords. Also, I took all the necessary steps to guarantee anonymity by using generic titles to ensure that readers are not able to identify any participant or educational institution in the research.

Ethical considerations also involve ensuring that the data is valid and trustworthy. As indicated in the "Validity and Trustworthiness" section, the researcher took the requisite steps to ensure that the information presented was accurate. Accordingly, the information presented to readers was only based on the participants' and/or secondary accounts of the phenomenon and not my view of what the experience ought to be. Additionally, the accuracy of the information was aided by writing that was "clear" so that the readers can experience "being there" (Creswell, 2007, p. 46) and also by member checking of interview transcripts.

In this chapter, I described the research methodology utilized in my study. I used a phenomenological-qualitative approach to obtain the experiences of three administrators, one teacher, one Behaviour Consultant, and one law enforcement/peace officer in Manitoba relating to the transition from punitive to positive school-based discipline. To obtain the experiences of these participants, informal interviews were conducted until sufficient information was gathered to answer the research questions. The collected data was then analyzed based on van Kaam's

modification method. Validity and trustworthiness were guaranteed through the accuracy of data presented, extensive time collecting data and member checking. Additionally, ethical considerations were taken into account to ensure respect for human dignity. In the next chapter, I will describe what was learned from school leaders regarding the transition from punitive to positive school-based discipline.

# Chapter Four: Findings

In this chapter, the findings of some of the participants in the study are presented. These findings were from three school leaders who have experienced or are experiencing the phenomenon investigated which was "A Shift in Paradigm from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline". The findings of the other participants will be presented in the next chapter for the purpose of triangulation. The findings pertain to the two research questions that guided the data collection process: 1) How do school leaders experience a shift in paradigm from punitive to positive school-based discipline? 2) How might federal and provincial laws influence school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline? Consequently, the general research findings applied to both questions are presented. These findings provide the platform to segue into the specific findings for each question.

## Fuelling the Shift

Based on the data collected, there were two themes identified that were important to the shift that the school leaders made from punitive to positive school-based discipline. The themes were the role of the school and the role of discipline. These themes were viewed as prerequisites for the shift because school leaders had to understand these roles in the lives of children before starting the transition. The data revealed that schools have a role to play in the lives of students in ensuring that they become productive citizens of Manitoba and by extension, Canada. The data also suggested that discipline was meant to teach students and help prepare them for adulthood. Accordingly, I will describe the role of the school and discipline that school leaders identified as important for a positive school environment.

**The Role of the School**

School leaders felt that the role of the school is to educate and prepare students to be productive citizens. For this reason, participants felt that educating students went beyond academics to include preparing students for adulthood. For example, when I asked participants about the role of a school in students' lives, School Leader One responded "the role of the school is to educate kids and to help build positive citizens and contributing members of society in education, and life, and behaviour, and all of those things. . ." and therefore, School Leader One acknowledged the social responsibility of the school. Hence, School Leader One had explicitly stated that the role of the school went beyond reading, writing, and doing math, for example, to prepare students for life and adulthood. Additionally, School Leader Two echoed that public education should "ensure that students learn and *all* students learn regardless of their background, social and economic profile, or their family profile. The school's role is to educate everyone and set them up to be successful citizens who enrich our world." Therefore, School Leader Two made it clear that education is a right that all students must enjoy and use to empower themselves as productive citizens despite their cultural and/or socioeconomic standings in Manitoba.

**The Role of Discipline**

The data showed that discipline played a significant role in the lives of students as it is vital to their personal development and ability to be productive citizens of Manitoba and by extension, Canada. The data indicated that the term 'discipline' did not mean to 'punish' but rather to 'teach'. For example, when I asked about the role of discipline in a student's life, it was expressed by one participant that:

> . . . You'd like the kids to learn from their mistakes and do it in a positive way, like a consequence doesn't have to be a negative thing; a consequence can be a helpful thing like restitution, like help fixing the problem is the term we talked about before is a big part of it. So, if you cause harm or hurt for someone else, how can we change that behaviour next time or fix the one we've already done? (School Leader One)

It was logical from this response to conclude that a mistake is seen as an opportunity to learn and fix the problem. Therefore, discipline should teach the student and prevent similar behaviours from reoccurring. Discipline should not force the student by way of punishment to change unacceptable behaviour, but rather enable reflection. From reflection comes growth through problem-solving skills that are viewed as life skills. The findings also indicated that with discipline, there are consequences to ensure students are held responsible for their behaviour. However, these consequences should enable students to return to the group strengthened and feeling good about themselves. Accordingly, any disciplinary measure that is utilized should enable students to learn, become stronger, and hone problem-solving skills that will fix the problem. The important role of discipline in students' lives also fuelled and motivated school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline.

## Question 1: School Leaders' Experience from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline

### Motivation to Shift

The data revealed that school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline was based on motivating factors. The motivating factors were both negative and positive and were seen as pull and push factors. Push factors force school leaders to utilize positive discipline, while pull factors attract school leaders to use positive discipline. Furthermore, the findings indicated that push and pull factors sometimes overlapped. Some of

these factors had great influence on the mindset (Dweck, 2006) of the participants that enabled them to shift and/or maintain the use of positive discipline. Punitive discipline was one of the motivating factors that influenced school leaders to shift.

**Punitive Discipline**

The data showed that the impact of punitive discipline on students was one of the reasons that school leaders decided to shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. The negative impact associated with punitive discipline or measures signalled the shift. Punitive measures include removing students from class, taking away items, taking away field trips and sports, and in-school and out-of-school suspension. However, the findings also revealed that according to the participants, a suspension may not necessarily be a punitive measure. The findings showed that the use of suspension determines whether or not it is positive or negative and such decisions will determine the type of impact it has on students' behaviour and academics.

Based on the school leaders' experiences, punitive measures have negative effects on students. School Leader One said, "I would say that punitive to me would be something that would hurt the student physically, emotionally, mentally for something that they have done. It could be pre-planned; like if you do this, you're going to get that". In a similar manner, School Leader Three stated that:

> If you take a look at it, another word is to punish. For me, there is a whole bunch of negative connotations that go along with punitive discipline. One is revenge or hurtful [act or behaviour]. In this day and age when I think of punitive, I think of criminal and I don't think there's any place for punitive disciplinary measures in the public school system. To me, it implies to get back at and along with that, there is the potential for

> degrading somebody, embarrassing somebody or causing humiliation, and punishing in a way that is not dignified.

Therefore, punitive discipline facilitated measures that were damaging the students and affecting their academic growth.

Nonetheless, the findings also indicated that there were benefits of punitive discipline. For this reason, suspension was seen as beneficial if it was utilized properly. The proper utilization of suspension involves the inclusion of support services. Consequently, the findings showed that there was a distinction between suspension and suspension with interventions. Accordingly, School Leader One explained that:

> . . . [Though] It's [suspension] a bit of respite for the staff and the kids but as far as changing the behaviour, the change in the behaviour comes from the work with the counsellor, the work with the social worker, the work with the [treatment centres], the work with the kids in the class to work with that kid and help them out. That's where the change comes in behaviour, not 'you're suspended for a day or two days and come back and catch up', that doesn't work.

Additionally, School Leader Two expressed that "I think the greatest benefit to a punitive approach is that it sends a message to all students that student behaviour and safety are important and that there will be consequences for extreme, dangerous, harming type behaviours". Though these benefits were pointed out, punitive discipline affected students' behaviour negatively.

**Impact of punitive discipline on students' behaviour.** The **s**chool leaders interviewed acknowledged that punitive discipline may improve behaviour for a short period but did not necessarily change the general conduct of students. School Leader One shared that with punitive

discipline students ". . . may behave in the short term . . ." and so the likelihood of the behaviour repeating itself is very high. In this regard, School Leader One stated that:

> Again, you have special kids that come along that need extra help once in a while . . . So this year, we have zero suspensions. Last year, we had about the same amount of kids and we had two students suspended. One student was suspended twice . . . but I mean it's the same kids. It's those tier needs, level two, three kids that need some real support, that's what we find. No change; suspension doesn't change that behaviour too often.

Accordingly, punitive discipline does not improve students' behaviour and this sentiment was also shared by School Leader Three. School Leader Three stated that: ". . . they do it over . . . it [punitive discipline] closes door for dialogue and conversation and it only reinforces the potential for conflict which is not a win-win situation" and so, there is no opportunity for the students to learn from the mistake.

However, the findings also showed that punitive discipline was needed to demonstrate to students that unacceptable behaviours were taken seriously. For this reason, School Leader Two expressed "I think it [punitive discipline] sends a message to other students that we need to take behaviour seriously and address serious behaviours in a way that sometimes leads to punitive consequences". Nevertheless, when School Leader Two was asked the question "what are some of the patterns you notice regarding the students who experience punitive discipline", School Leader Two responded that:

> Again, each case is going to be individual in nature. Sometimes it has an impact on students' behaviour and they understand and realize that there needs to be consequences and will be consequences and so, therefore, they would tend to change their behaviour. In other cases with other situations or other students, it probably doesn't have an impact on

> their behaviour . . . I say that because eventually, if you keep giving out consequences, then the consequences mean nothing to students . . . They don't see a relationship between the negative behaviour and the consequence, and the consequences don't bother them. So there's no connection there to make the change in behaviour that needs to be made.

Subsequently, School Leader Two also expressed that ". . . if punitive discipline is the only method that is used then it's quite likely that the behaviours will repeat themselves and require further exclusion". Therefore, School Leader Two acknowledged that punitive discipline did not change the behaviour and as a result, created opportunities for further excluding students. As a result of the negative impact on students' behaviour, punitive discipline in this context encouraged school leaders to utilize positive discipline. Furthermore, it is logical that with all the behavioural concerns, academic performance would be affected.

**Impact of punitive discipline on students' academic performance.** The school leaders expressed that punitive measures did not aid academic performance. Accordingly, School Leader One said: ". . . I don't see the punitive way as really learning [for students] or improving their education". School Leader One also highlighted the importance for students to be at a place where they can maximize their academic capabilities, but punitive discipline affects the process negatively. School Leader One expressed that:

> . . . We want them to be part of the educational process and if they are not here because they are suspended or they are afraid to come to school or they are afraid of the teacher, they are not going to be at their optimal learning time because they are worried about what could happen, what if I do this wrong.

Hence, participants reported that punitive discipline does not create the appropriate environment for students' learning.

In a similar manner, School Leader Two expressed that punitive measures may further debilitate students' academic performance if they were already struggling. School Leader Two said that:

> Well, quite often we see that students that are involved in behaviours that would lead to punitive measures are already struggling academically. So then, if they are suspended from school and not able to be at school, their academic performances are going to be further jeopardized by them not being here and quite often, students that are subject to punitive measures have a difficult time achieving the outcomes in the first place because they may have learning gaps or their mind is not the best it can be and in a state where the learning can be optimized.

Punitive discipline was not beneficial to students' academic growth and created further learning gaps for struggling students. Consequently, these reasons were motivating and push factors that prompted school leaders to utilize positive discipline. With the notable ripple effects of punitive discipline so far, there was a strain on relationships.

**Impact of punitive discipline on relationships.** The school leaders reported the belief that punitive discipline was detrimental to relationships because it did not fix the problem. School Leader One explained that punitive discipline ". . . creates a poor climate. I think it creates a relationship breakdown between the student and the teacher or the student and myself". For this reason, School Leader One tries to come up with a solution that will fix the problem and build or maintain a relationship with the student. For this reason, School Leader One said:

> When a student comes in to deal with an issue, I want to come up with a win-win resolution, almost a restitution model, like how can we fix these problems . . . I'm not a complete restitution model person, but I do have understanding of that, how can we fix the problem? If you cause harm to another student, can we fix that relationship with the student or the physical injury or whatever it is and how can we move forward in a positive way? Not do that same behaviour, what would you do differently?

Therefore, through that restitution-type model, School Leader One can guide students positively regarding the issue and maintain or build relationships with them. School Leader Two also echoed a similar tone regarding punitive discipline. School Leader Two shared that ". . . for the most part, I would say that the immediate impact is that it damages relationships between teachers and students, and principal and student, and possibly parents and students". School Leader Three also agreed that relationships deteriorate when punitive discipline is utilized: "it [punitive discipline] can be damaging to the relationship between myself and a student, myself and parents". Therefore, the understanding and experience that punitive discipline damages relationships was a motivating and push factor to shift from punitive discipline. Also, these negative effects were not confined to schools only but spread to the wider community.

**Impact of punitive discipline on the community.** Some schools leaders felt that when suspension was utilized as a punitive measure, that is, without the requisite interventions and supports, it negatively affected the community. For example, School Leader One explained that students who are excluded from school may be labelled as the "bad kids" and "so that might have a negative impact on the community as a whole. Because if you look at any of the school shootings and any of the research into that, there are times, these are suspended kids. . ." Hence, there is the perception and also, the research, based on School Leader One's comments, that

suspended students are associated with school shootings. Therefore, there can be serious implications for the school and wider community stemming from the utilization of punitive measures.

School Leader One shared that excluding students might result in financial setbacks for struggling families. School Leader One said that:

> I don't want to stereotype kids or families but there are times that the kids you are suspending, the parents have to take a day off from work, there's a financial cost for the family who probably cannot really afford to miss a day of work. . .

Therefore, suspension can place additional burdens on parents or guardians who may need to take time off from work to stay home with their child. However, the reverse is also true. If parents do not take time-off to supervise their children, there would be another negative spin-off of suspension because unsupervised students on suspension sometimes engage in criminal activities. Therefore, punitive discipline has a ripple effect not just on the school but the wider community and so, this was a motivating and push factor to use positive discipline.

The results showed that punitive discipline affected students, the school, and the community negatively. Though there were a few advantages of punitive discipline highlighted, the negative effects of the disciplinary measure override the benefits. Accordingly, school leaders were motivated to explore another disciplinary option that would be beneficial to students personally and academically in light of the role of the school and discipline in students' lives. Hence, the negative effects of punitive discipline were motivating factors for school leaders to shift to the utilization of positive discipline.

**Positive Discipline**

Positive discipline centres on relationship building and creating a positive school climate where students can thrive academically and personally. In this regard, a positive school climate is built on relationships, mutual respect, and conversation. For this reason, School Leader Two expressed that:

> Well, a positive school environment is one where these types of conversations take place [about what we want to see], and where we agree as a community on how we want to treat one another, and where we have training, both the teaching staff and the students are trained in different aspects of restitution, and the conversations are respectful, but there's learning that goes on in those conversations.

Within this positive context, there are expectations, guidelines, or a vision but not rules. For this reason, School Leader One expressed "I don't believe in rules too much . . . We have the PAX vision, the expectation of the kids; what we want to see as a group . . ." Therefore, positive school-based discipline may use a collaborative approach to guide or teach students to achieve academic and personal growth based on school leaders and staff's belief system.

**The importance of the leader's belief system in implementing positive discipline.** School leaders emphasized that positive discipline is a belief system that can be incorporated into any model. Accordingly, School Leader Two stated that "I think it is a belief system that we all hold. That my belief system fits with the restitution model, where I believe teaching students to behave is the same as teaching them to read or do math". This belief system is built on the premise that there is good in everyone. This premise was evident when School Leader One said: "for beliefs, I believe in the best of everyone and even kids that make poor choices, if you get to the heart or really down to the core, everyone is a good person". Therefore, believing that there is

good in each student despite the poor choices that they may make was a motivating and intrinsic push factor that encouraged school leaders to shift to utilizing positive discipline.

**Types of positive discipline utilized by leaders implementing positive discipline.** The findings indicated that positive discipline manifested through several disciplinary models. These models are based on a general belief system that there is good in everyone, everyone makes mistakes, and mistakes are an opportunity to learn. The following models were utilized by the school leaders with each utilizing at least two of the three models:

***PAX.*** The PAX model is described as a preventative tool that enables academic and behavioural improvement (PAXIS Institute, 2018). It is also credited with providing a "lifetime of benefits for every child by improving self-regulation and co-regulation with peers" (PAXIS Institute, 2018). This model utilizes strategies such as the PAX vision and game to create and maintain a positive school environment. PAX promotes learning and enables students to "self-regulate" and learn "to make good decisions" (School Leader One). As a result of these qualities, PAX was credited for "building resiliency in the kids, and increasing instructional time, which is again positive for everyone" (School Leader One). Additionally, according to School Leader One, PAX had a positive influence on students' mental health and wellbeing and academic performance. Also, some other components of PAX were positive and these included conversations at the beginning of the year regarding the "kind of classroom that you want to have as a community and talks about creating a space that is respectful . . . and meaningful roles" (School Leader Two). These two components are described as positive because they can meet students' "need for power, it can meet their need for belonging, it can meet their need for fun, it gives them some freedom and so those meaningful roles then have a positive impact on students' behaviour" (School Leader Two) and overall well-being.

However, the findings highlighted some variations with PAX as a positive disciplinary model. PAX appeared to be designed for younger students based on the games and the "Granny Wacky Prize". School Leader Two mentioned:

> When we took the PAX training, I posed the question to the presenters of how many high schools were involved in PAX and they said that there weren't any that they were aware of, so I think it is geared more toward younger grades.

Additionally, PAX was seen as a mechanism for controlling students' behaviour. In this regard, School Leader Two expressed that "compliance based on a rewards-punishment system" may be effective for the short-term. It was further stated by School Leader Two that behavioural control is "something that students need to do on their own" guided by control theory. Accordingly, students should do the ". . . right thing because it is the right thing to do, as opposed to giving them a Granny's Wacky Prize" (School Leader Two). Therefore, some components of the PAX model did not align well with some school leaders' beliefs about positive discipline. Based on the findings, PAX may not be similar to restorative disciplinary models if extrinsic factors are used to gain compliance. Since PAX was not totally aligned to school leaders' belief system, some school leaders utilized other disciplinary strategies such as restitution.

***Restitution.*** Restitution principles are based on control theory and enable students to intrinsically develop the skills needed to function in a school environment where there are a plethora of needs. Accordingly, restitution is seen as "a philosophy of discipline that is based on intrinsic motivation" (Real Restitution, 2020). The educational context of restitution as a disciplinary approach was "created by Diane Gossen and based on William Glasser's Control theory principles" (Real Restitution, 2020). The approach is known for helping students to develop and maintain self-discipline (Real Restitution, 2020). Restitution is also closely linked to

restorative justice and one of its guiding principles is that mistakes are an opportunity to learn. As a result, according to School Leader One, the emphasis is placed on fixing the problem and figuring out better ways to do things when trying to meet a particular need. Therefore, conversations are essential to ensure that students are meeting their needs "without jeopardizing the needs of others" (School Leader Two). Also, restitution eliminates the "shame" and "guilt" that may cause low self-esteem and creates the opportunity to build or strengthen relationships (School Leader Two). Nonetheless, there are "bottom-lines" and so "you're teaching students again there that yes, you made a choice, but you have to take responsibility" (School Leader Three) for your action. Therefore, restitution was used as a strategy to implement and maintain positive discipline similar to the Seven Teachings.

***Seven teachings.*** The Seven Teachings originated from indigenous cultures and are based on human beings' interactions with each other and the earth (School Leader Two). The Seven Teachings are also referred to as the Seven Grandfather Teachings and were given to the Anishinaabe people by the Grandfathers because they were not "living in harmony with each other nor with the rest of creation" (Native Reflections, 2015, p. 3). The Teachings are based on love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility and truth and provide a way of being that is positive to all human beings and the environment (School Leader Two). This model creates opportunities for conversation, relationship building, and strengthening. It was also emphasized that the Seven Teachings "set up the environment to be a place where safety then becomes the priority" (School Leader Two). Furthermore, the findings indicated that the Seven Teachings were utilized with restitution and accordingly, students are responsible for their actions and will face the appropriate consequences based on those actions. The Seven Teachings were utilized as an approach to implement and maintain discipline by disciplining students with dignity.

***Discipline with dignity.*** Discipline with dignity is a disciplinary approach that "supports various interventions, strategies, and constructs intended to help children make better choices and to make life better for teachers – to offer educators a different vision" (Curwin, Mendler & Mendler, 2018, p. 2). The vision was to improve students' behaviour by building relationships because the "traditional humiliation, detention, in-school suspension, and suspension" (Curwin, Mendler & Mendler, 2018, p. 2) were not effective in improving behaviour. Accordingly, the main characteristics of discipline with dignity are responsible thinking, respect, collaboration, relationship, and shared decision-making (Teaching Learning Center, n.d, para. 3). With this model, there are different approaches to discipline that support and encourage students to make good decisions. For example, School Leader Three stated that ". . . when I'm dealing with kids, if you're going to implement something, it's better to have a shared vision than a top-down vision" and so students get to be a part of the decision-making process that may have future implications for them. Also, through shared decision-making, it creates the space for conversations, collaboration, relationship building and strengthening, and mutual respect from staff and students. Therefore, discipline with dignity creates a positive environment by treating individuals with "dignity, respect, kindness, and generosity" (School Leader Three). These are core values that each student should enjoy despite unacceptable conduct (School Leader Three). Additionally, the findings demonstrated that this model was utilized with other models and there were consequences for misconduct. However, to implement and utilize the different positive approaches effectively, language played a vital role.

**The importance of language when implementing positive discipline.** School leaders felt that language was very important to effectively reap the benefits that are associated with any positive disciplinary model utilized. In light of this context, School Leader Two stated that:

> I think that the language we use is very important. When we talk about behaviour, we talk about the fact that all behaviour is purposeful, and that all behaviour is meeting our needs. . . So that validates a student's identity and helps them to flip into their prefrontal cortex versus using more negative terms, blame and shame, and failure type language that allows students to revert into their brainstem . . . They are not going to hear you or they are not going to be able to reason the kind of things that you are wanting to teach them about behaviour.

Accordingly, the language used when communicating with students regarding behaviour should be respectful and carefully considered to prevent negative triggers. Therefore, a shift from failure type language, such as blaming and shaming, to purposeful language related to validating and meeting the needs of the student is needed. Also, equally important was the tone that accompanied the language. As a result, School Leader Three indicated that ". . . language is important and not only the language but how you say it is also important" and so, highlighting the importance of tone. Therefore, positive discipline requires communicative skills on the part of school leaders that will diffuse a situation as opposed to infuriating it. This situation is achieved by enabling students to remain in their prefrontal cortex of the brain where they can be logical, respectful, and make sound decisions. Some of these skills were garnered from role models.

**The importance of role models when implementing positive discipline.** The results showed that mentorship was a motivating factor that enabled school leaders to utilize positive discipline. This kind of mentorship came from other school leaders (School Leader Three) and even parents, based on the values that they inculcated in their young leaders. It was based on this

context, that when asked to describe the values or beliefs that have influenced your utilization of positive discipline, School Leader One stated that:

> The values and beliefs are my upbringing and having positive parents and positive teachers growing up. I would [also] say that working with positive staff members makes you want to mirror their treatment of kids. For beliefs, I believe in the best of everyone and even kids that make poor choices, if you get to the heart or really down to the core, everyone is a good person.

Accordingly, role models or mentors served as an extrinsic factor for school leaders to shift to using positive discipline based on the advantageous impact it has on students' academic and personal development. Therefore, there is an interconnectedness with previous positive discipline educational encounters, and those encounters are currently shaping how discipline is perceived and applied in schools.

Positive discipline is a belief system that hinges heavily on relationships. Through relationships with students, school leaders and teachers were able to utilize different positive approaches. The positive approaches utilized were PAX, restitution, the Seven Teachings, and discipline with dignity. These approaches were utilized to implement and maintain positive discipline. Language and tone were particularly important to the effectiveness of these positive disciplinary approaches. Role models also encouraged school leaders to utilize positive approaches based on the impacts associated with positive discipline.

### Impacts of Positive Discipline

The impacts associated with positive discipline served as motivating factors for school leaders to shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. Based on the findings, the impacts were positive. These impacts enabled school leaders to see the value of positive

discipline. From these positive impacts, students benefitted academically, behaviourally, personally, and socially. For this reason, this section outlines the positive impacts associated with positive discipline according to the findings. With positive discipline, there was improved student behaviour and academic performance, as well as, the creation of an inclusive school environment. Nonetheless, the findings indicated that improved student behaviour was necessary to reap the other benefits.

**Impacts of positive discipline on students' behaviour.** School leaders agreed that one of the benefits associated with positive discipline is improved student behaviour. Accordingly, School Leader One expressed that school leaders' and teachers' modelling of good behaviour is necessary to promote a culture of positive behaviour. Hence, School Leader One said that "if they [kids] see you unhappy, yelling, and upset, just focusing on discipline, and trying to fix everything, that's what they are going to feed off of. But if you are positive and happy, I think that's generally a good thing". Therefore, it is important for school practitioners to exhibit the type of behaviour that they would like to see from students.

Also, the improved behaviour from the utilization of positive discipline reduces safety concerns and suspensions from schools. Regarding safety, School Leader Two mentioned that:

> . . . If you're teaching students to behave and to do the right thing because it is the right thing to do, then in all likelihood, there's going to be growth there and so then, with that growth, would come a reduction of those behaviours that would be safety concerns.

Hence, it was purported that the use of positive discipline can prevent behavioural issues that may cause safety issues or require a suspension. In this regard, School Leader One stated that "I think that you build a positive relationship and through positive, I am not going to say it's going to eliminate suspensions but I think it would reduce them". This idea was expressed using the

conditional tense because School Leader One rarely encounters behavioural challenges that require a suspension. Based on this context, School Leader One stated that ". . . I'm going to say in the last 10 years, we probably suspended, in suspension days, three to four days of female suspension and probably 10 days, male suspension". The reduced suspensions correlated with the use of positive disciplinary measures that started out then with a different model which transitioned into a restitution-type model and based on the notion that there is good in everybody.

Additionally, improved student behaviour is an ongoing process that requires a lot of time. School Leader Two stated that "well, I think we treat behaviour similar to the way that we treat academics, in that it's an ongoing process. We are always learning to do better". Therefore, School Leader Two acknowledged that the results from utilizing positive discipline may not be immediate, but it is worth utilizing based on the potential positive impact on students. Despite the process, School Leader Two acknowledged the benefits of positive discipline. School Leader Two said that:

> So, it's really about changing the tone of the conversation from one where punitive would be that you have done something wrong and therefore, you must pay, to you can do better and here's how you might do better. Here's how you might get stronger and return to the group strengthened.

For these reasons, the influence of positive discipline on students' behaviour was a motivating or pull factor for school leaders to utilize positive discipline. Also, improved behaviour leads to increased student achievement.

**Impacts of positive discipline on academic performance.** The findings showed that when student behaviour improved, it was associated with increased academic performance. As a result of the positive and safe space created, students are better able to maximize their academic

potential. In this regard, School Leader One stated that "I think that when students feel safe, their academic performance improves . . ." and this improvement is directly related to the utilization of positive discipline. The utilization of positive discipline reduces the behavioural occurrences that may require a suspension. As a result, students spend more time in school achieving learning outcomes as opposed to being retarded by a suspension. Consequently, the academic benefit of utilizing positive discipline was a motivating pull factor for school leaders to employ positive disciplinary measures. With improved behaviour and student achievement, positive discipline further fosters an inclusive environment where students can maximize their academic capabilities.

**Impacts of positive discipline on inclusion.** Positive discipline was utilized by school leaders because of its flexible nature and potential to foster inclusion. The use of positive discipline fits comfortably in any positive disciplinary model. Accordingly, the findings demonstrated that models such as restitution, restorative justice, Seven Teachings, discipline with dignity, and PAX to an extent are belief systems with a positive focus in ensuring that there is a relational connection with students and that they can do well despite their respective needs and challenges. Consequently, the flexibility of positive discipline to fit in any positive model transcends culture, ethnic groups, race, sexual orientation, and religion.

The adaptable nature of positive discipline to fit in any model makes it ideal for fostering inclusion in schools. The findings showed that positive discipline was beneficial to everyone including minority groups. So, when asked to describe whether or not positive discipline is beneficial to minority groups, School Leader Three pointed out that:

> I never thought about minority groups, I just thought that positive discipline is good for everybody. So, in answer to that, I would say that of course that it's beneficial. Our

> school population is 50 percent First Nations students. So, the actual minority group depending on how you look at it might be your other cultures in the building . . .

Furthermore, School Leader Three expressed that positive discipline fosters inclusion:

> Because it doesn't look at minority groups, it doesn't look at colour, it doesn't look at race or religion. It's dealing with people as humans, it's dealing with people that have feelings, it's dealing with people that are going to make mistakes, and it's dealing with people that need to have opportunities for growth and change, and to have social interactions. Those are all common things to everyone.

Therefore, the enhancing of inclusion in the school environment was a motivating pull factor for school leaders to utilize positive discipline.

According to the three school leaders who participated in this study, positive discipline contributes to improved behaviour, increased academic achievement, and inclusion. With the use of positive discipline, negative behaviours were eliminated or reduced significantly. The elimination or reduction in negative behaviours further contributed to a safe school environment. With improved behaviour and a safe school environment, students were better able to achieve more academically. Positive discipline may also create an inclusive space for everyone because of its potential nature to transcend areas such as culture, ethnic groups, race, sexual orientation, and religion. Logically, with all the positive impacts serving as motivating factors, school leaders were ready to journey from punitive to positive discipline.

### Shifting from Punitive to Positive Discipline is a Journey

Acting on their motivations to shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline, school leaders embarked on a shift that they described as a journey. Based on the experiences of the school leaders, the journey had different starting points and times that were leading to the

same destination; they were reaping similar benefits from the shift. However, there were not always smooth roads and since this journey was venturing out into sometimes, unknown territories, there were challenges. Accordingly, the school leaders were equipped with the necessary tools such as supports and strategies to respond to the challenges throughout this time-consuming journey.

**The importance of time when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** School leaders expressed that shifting is a journey that takes a lot of time. The initial stages that included the training and background work took up to five years. As a result, School Leader Two expressed that ". . . in terms of shifting toward a more proactive and restitution-type model, that happened for me over a lengthy period of time. I would say at least five years . . ." However, interestingly, School Leader Two stated that ". . . the shift for me occurred when I started taking training in the restitution and control theory and I found that it made lot of sense to me." For this reason, education related to positive discipline may trigger the journey from punitive to positive discipline. Though a significant amount of time is needed, training is an essential preparation to start the journey.

Therefore, transitioning to positive discipline took place over a period of time. In this regard, School Leader Three explained: "I grew up in a time when discipline was punitive" and therefore, then School Leader Three did not recognize any other means of discipline but punitive. School Leader Three continued: ". . . I am bringing my own experiences to the classroom as a teacher and so when I first started teaching . . . I would put discipline and punishment as synonymous words when in fact, they are really not". For this reason, it took time to change the mindset regarding discipline. As a result, School Leader Three added that: "I had to go through aligning my own; changing my own belief system and that took a period of time." Therefore, it

took time for some school leaders to understand positive discipline and it was a personal decision over time because it made sense considering the research and their personal experiences and successes with positive measures. Time was also an important factor for school leaders to gain needed staff support for the journey.

**The process of gaining staff support when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** It took time for some school leaders to get the support of their staff because positive discipline is a belief system and not everyone shares the same beliefs. Accordingly, some staff members may not necessarily buy-in to the notion of positive discipline. The lack of support for positive discipline from some staff may result from formative experiences or assumptions about discipline. Therefore, it takes time to share the vision, for them to understand the vision, and realign their belief systems. However, the time it takes to get staff support may vary in the transitioning process. In this regard, School Leader Three stated that ". . . it all depends on whether you are a first-year teacher, or a tenth-year teacher, right and have you had an opportunity in terms of, are you a parent and have you had to discipline your own child . . ." School Leader Three expressed that the experiences of teachers will vary the time in which a school leader may obtain support from staff. Nonetheless, School Leader Three further stated that it was important to "leave different portals open so that people can jump on board at any point in time". These opened portals were essential because people may have an "aha" moment at different periods. For example, they may have a wide awakening in their personal life or "something may happen at school five years after we've been doing this and you're kind of going ah, I finally get what . . . is trying to talk about, I finally get it now". Therefore, time is an essential part of the journey to garner support and thereafter, time was needed for training.

**The importance of training when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** Training is an important part of the journey, in that it takes time to get an understanding of how positive discipline functions and how to implement it successfully. The period regarded as training varied from school leader to school leader. For this reason, School Leader One expressed that "It's all a journey right. Everyone's on a different place on that journey" and it should not be expected that a first-year school leader would have had 30 or 40 different training seminars as a seasoned school leader. It was also emphasized that everyone learns as they continue on the journey. Furthermore, there were no specific timelines to achieve some things because of unforeseen events that may change routes or courses of action and therefore, training is ongoing (School Leader One). Similarly, School Leader Two stated that "I think the greatest factor was the training . . ." because it took place "over a number of hours, a number of days, and a number of years, and includes different levels of training in restitution which I have taken four or five different levels of training in restitution". Accordingly, the time it may take for an institution to implement positive discipline may depend on the number of years that the school leader is serving in that capacity and the initial training needed to make that shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. Training was also necessary for the successful implementation of positive discipline.

**The significance of implementation when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** The shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline hinged heavily on staff support and training. The time when a school leader decided to shift was not always synonymous with implementation. The findings indicate that school leaders had to educate themselves before introducing positive discipline to staff and implementing it. As a result, School Leader Two stated that "I have taken many, many hours of training in Restitution and Control Theory . . . and

then when I wanted to introduce it to the staff, I started having conversations at staff meetings talking about restitution". Furthermore, School Leader Two mentioned that "I would model the Restitution Model with students and staff so they could see what it looked like and could see what the conversations looked like and then we would train students . . ." and these activities characterized the implementation plan for a shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. However, for some school leaders, implementing positive discipline was not as difficult in a new school because of their experience with a previous implementation. School Leader Three expressed that "the benefit for me is that I was a vice-principal first and so then, I was able to work with someone who was able to mentor and teach me about discipline with dignity and . . . positive discipline". Accordingly, School Leader Three was able to experience a principal implementing positive discipline in a school. For this reason, School Leader Three said: "so then when I was principal or got to be principal at my own school, for me, I had to have my own vision of what that was going to look like in my school . . ." Therefore, the implementation of positive discipline required a considerable amount of time, but this was different for individual school leaders. Following implementation, school leaders had to ensure positive discipline was maintained to guarantee its effectiveness.

**The significance of maintaining positive discipline when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** For school leaders to continue on the journey, there were several things that they did to maintain the use of positive discipline. In this regard, School Leader One expressed that "it is important to have positive staff and that's really important in the hiring piece; doing your background checks since everyone in the interview can be positive but you want to find out how they treat kids". Additionally, School Leader One mentioned that continuous staff development and working with students "here on a PAX vision or on restitution", and the use of

positive language, were strategies used to maintain positive discipline. Furthermore, to maintain positive discipline, it was important not to "react" to every situation but "interact" with the situation. Communication with parents, students, and the staff was essential to positive discipline. For this reason, School Leader One's school has an "open house" at the start of each year to build relationships with families and the community. Proactive planning was also an important component of the maintenance of positive discipline because students thrive on consistency (School Leader One). If something should happen, students would expect to be treated with respect and not shame. Consequently, School Leader One pointed out that being disappointed and angry were two different things; the latter which could lead to shame, being detrimental to positive discipline (School Leader One).

The findings indicated that extrinsic motivation, such as the use of rewards, should not be utilized as a means to maintain positive discipline. School Leader One described the use of rewards as a business model that "might improve an individual for a short-term" but does not change behaviour because it is the right thing to do, but changes behaviour for the short period because the individual is "chasing the carrots". School Leader One emphasized the use of intrinsic motivators such as verbal praise as an effective strategy to maintain positive discipline. School Leader One also explained that there were odd times when students were randomly given treats. As a result School Leader One said that "another thing I heard about is "random not plandom". So randomly, we'll do ice-cream for the whole school because we had a great week, or a class may do a super job; let's go for 15 minutes extra recess". However, School Leader One was quick to point out that this was not the "carrot sticks" situation, because it was not an expectation.

Additionally, for School Leader Two, staff involvement was one critical component of maintaining the use of positive discipline. Staff involvement is critical to the decision-making process because "it can't be a top-down decision; it has to be a ground-roots decision. They have to be involved in the conversations, involved in part of the decision-making process in order for it to be successful". Accordingly, maintaining positive discipline is achieved through collaboration. Furthermore, it was important for students to be a part of collaborative decision-making. In this regard, the students at School Leader Two's school are placed in groups each year for team-building activities. According to School Leader Two, in those groups " . . . they were involved in larger conversations about respect and what kind of a school they would want to have; what does it look like, sound like, feel like and what are the actions involved in being a restitution school". Therefore, a positive school environment was better maintained when students and staff were involved in the decision-making process; creating a positive vision for the school.

Similarly, for School Leader Three, the staff played a vital role in ensuring that positive discipline was maintained. In this context, School Leader Three expressed that relationships with students were necessary to maintain positive discipline because if teachers can have a relationship with students, they can be taught anything. For this reason, School Leader Three said:

> You can be the best Physics teacher, or the most knowledgeable person in Social Studies, but if you can't build relationships with kids then you don't match up with me philosophically and it wouldn't be a good fit for either one of us.

Therefore, the values of the school leader and the staff need to be aligned to maintain a positive school environment. Furthermore, School Leader Three ensured that the community is

knowledgeable about the disciplinary measure being utilized at school. Accordingly, each year, School Leader Three's school holds a traditional feast with the community which is seen as a good opportunity for the entire school community. As a result, School Leader Three expressed that "it's a real nice gathering where you can just learn and enjoy. So, when you have those opportunities to break down barriers, it goes a long way to supporting the discipline that you want". Therefore, these strategies and activities were utilized to maintain positive discipline. Also, for school leaders, assessing the effectiveness of positive discipline was as important as maintaining it.

**The importance of evaluating positive discipline when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** The findings indicated that positive discipline employed by the school leaders was evaluated using varying means. For School Leader One, spreadsheets were utilized to track infractions and to determine whether there were repeated issues. If behavioural issues were less and were not being repeated, it was an indication that the positive discipline was effective. Similarly, if academic outcomes were being met and the mental health and wellbeing of the students was cared for, then these were other indications that positive discipline was working (School Leader One). Furthermore, the *Tell Them From Me Survey* is a provincial "online student survey, created by The Learning Bar (TLB), which allows students to provide their input into school improvement anonymously" (Manitoba Provincial Report, 2014, p. 3). Based on the data, students and parents take the survey and it provides information relating to discipline, school culture, how students feel about education, and connectedness to adults (School Leader One & School Leader Three). The survey is important because it provides school leaders with direct feedback from parents and students. Based on the feedback from the

categories, some school leaders found it as a good assessment tool from which they could make improvements to their schools in areas such as discipline for example.

Additionally, the number of suspensions and classroom behavioural issues were mentioned as indicators to assess positive discipline (School Leader Three). School Leader Three mentioned that you can evaluate the effectiveness of positive discipline by talking to staff and students. School Leader Three further pointed out that the "intangibles" formed a significant part of the evaluation. In this regard, School Leader Three expressed that:

> And then for me, there're the intangibles; I like how our building feels, so I really enjoy that. You can walk into a school and you get the feeling, right. And so that feeling that I have today won't necessarily be the same feeling I had when I walked in here prior to coming as an administrator.

Therefore, evaluation and reflection are necessary to assess the effectiveness of positive discipline. Moreover, the assessment enables school leaders to identify challenges and to respond accordingly.

**The importance of identifying challenges and responses when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** Based on the findings, there were challenges and responses along the journey. The challenges identified were two-folded; relating to students and staff. Regarding students, self-regulation was identified as a major challenge among younger students when it came to the utilization of positive discipline. Also, there were other factors such as growth, hormones, and social media that accounted for the challenges linked to self-regulation (School Leader One). In responding to these challenges, School Leader One expressed that the continuous use of PAX and restitution, as well as additional support from the division in terms of psychological support or individual programming for students, helped in this context.

Additionally, School Leader One further expressed that teacher training in the areas of mental health, trauma, having academic and behavioural plans, and communicating with parents were all ways to respond to student challenges.

In addition, another challenge that affected the use of positive school-based discipline was the outside factors that had a great impact on students' health and well-being. For this reason, School Leader Three stated that ". . . a lot of them [students] suffer from poverty, a lot of them suffer from trauma, a lot of them suffer from some sort of abuse, and so some of them may be self-medicating themselves". In responding to this challenge, School Leader Three said that a lot of time should be spent talking about "how we love our kids . . . and how we support our kids" and to give them a sense of belonging. School Leader Three further indicated that the Seven Teachings were utilized with all students to make First Nation students feel welcome and that they belonged in the school.

Also, the findings demonstrated that there were several challenges related to the staff and positive discipline. It was found that the diversity of the group may pose significant challenges for positive discipline (School Leader Two). One of those challenges was having new staff members on the staff for reasons such as maternity and sick leaves. These new members often did not have the training or positive mindset and this was especially the case of older persons from the "old school system" (School Leader One). As a result, these members of staff were usually punitive and sometimes, it was challenging to work with those staff that did not have the awareness or training. However, in responding to this challenge, School Leader One said "I kind of take it for granted that my teachers treat the kids great and at times, you'll have to give them different reminders of how we do it here which is in a positive way". In maintaining the positive way, School Leader One ensured that each new staff member got a copy of "What Great

Teachers do Differently" (Whitaker, 2012) to read and follow-up with conversations. Additionally, new staff members were partnered with a mentor to provide support. School Leader One further highlighted that evaluation and classroom visits were used to assess what was happening and to provide the necessary support (School Leader One).

The findings showed that the lack of parental support may challenge the use of positive discipline. In this regard, School Leader Three mentioned that "where sometimes conflict arises is when parents don't necessarily agree with what we're doing here and so then, that can set up conflict, it can set up misunderstanding, it can set up enabling or I've seen parents and families enabled behaviours [supported behaviours]." For School Leader Three, families play an important role in the lives of children, because they are home the majority of the day, with only about six hours at school. Accordingly, School Leader Three felt that this challenge could be eliminated if there was better communication with families through the school leader, guidance counsellor, or divisional social worker. Additionally, School Leader Three highlighted that about 50 percent of the school population was First Nation students whose families are impacted by systemic and structural barriers. Many parents and grandparents are still suffering from the wrongs of the past and children dealing with trauma. Accordingly, "it is a challenge to get parents or community members in school because some of them have such a negative experience" (School Leader Three) with the school system. In responding to this challenge, School Leader Three carried out a number of Indigenous celebrations and practices with students and families, by going into the community, because there is a negative stigma attached to the school. Nonetheless, there were some really difficult challenges identified as bumps and bruises.

***Bumps and bruises when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.*** There were some challenges described as "bumps and bruises" that were particularly difficult for a school

leader on this journey. These were bumps that hit very hard and bruises that hurt so deeply that they provided enough obstacles to halt the journey. According to School Leader Three when a school leader is making a change, it can be a very lonely journey. For this reason, School Leader Three mentioned:

> And so, when I say there's been some hell along the way, I really mean it because people can be mean and people can say and do things that are hurtful. And when I say you don't take things personal, people have made things personal along the way and that's unfortunate because you're trying to do what's in the best interest of the kids in your organization. If you're going to do it right, it is not always easy and just be prepared that you're going to have some bumps and bruises along the way.

Therefore, these times were very testing and support was not necessarily received where it was anticipated. Consequently, School Leader Three suggested that it is important for a school leader who is taking this journey to have balance and exercise self-care. Accordingly, School Leader Three said, "so that's one thing, whether it is through exercise, or family, or through your spouse, or friends, doing things, you keep different perspectives and balance". Additionally, School Leader Three stressed that it is important to be knowledgeable and confident in yourself and your abilities in terms of relationship-building as a school leader when undertaking change. Therefore, responding to the challenges effectively is necessary to shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline.

**The importance of a paradigm shift when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** The findings indicated that a paradigm shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline had happened years ago because society has changed. Several factors accounted for the shift; immigrants, LGBTQ, religions, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, awareness of

fundamental rights, “white privilege”, and children being the agents of change (School Leader Three). As a result of changes in society, “parents have a lot more of a stakeholder power than they ever did” (School Leader One) and accordingly, punitive measures are not necessarily accepted anymore. However, School Leader One pointed out that there was still a lot of work needed to be done with students, families, and educators to ensure the transition takes place. Also, it was pointed out by School Leader Three that though 2004 was a reference point, the paradigm shift started before corporal punishment was made illegal.

Nonetheless, regarding divisions’ shift, some school leaders were still punitive and exercised punitive measures. For this reason, School Leader Three recounted “I also do know that in this school that they had a great deal of discipline problems prior to me coming . . . they had a lot of suspensions, 144 [for one year].” As a result, it took “some different thinking, beliefs, and leadership, bumps and bruises along the way to make the changes” (School Leader Three) for that shift in paradigm. School Leader Three further expressed that it was important to remove the “mob mentality” by having conversations with staff because “with people, there are strength and numbers but the strength and numbers can be negative too and so then, you have to break those groups down” (School Leader Three) to make the necessary paradigm shift at a school.

Therefore, shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline is a journey, based on the experiences of the school leaders. The findings indicated that school leaders started this journey at different intervals in their career and for them, it was a paradigm shift that happened many years ago. Also, the results further showed that school leaders were at different stages on that continuum from punitive to positive school-based discipline. There were a number of factors that could possibly account for the different placement on the continuum, with the most obvious

being a school leader of an elementary as opposed to a high school. It was the sentiment that school leaders of high schools were more punitive than elementary school leaders based on the nature of students' behaviours. Therefore, based on the continuum, from punitive to positive, elementary school leaders may be more positively positioned in this context. Nonetheless, the school leaders experienced similar challenges and results on the journey.

For school leaders, shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline was a journey that took time. Time was essential for garnering support, training, and implementation of positive discipline. There were challenges on the journey and some were identified as bumps and bruises. However, there were responses to these challenges to ensure the journey continued. Along the journey, evaluation and maintenance were essential to ensure the effectiveness of positive discipline. As road users in Manitoba on any journey, the laws outlined in the *Highway Traffic Act* (The Highway Traffic Act, 1985) must be observed. Likewise, laws have influenced school leaders' journey from punitive to positive school-based discipline.

### Question 2: The Law and School-Based Discipline

Schools in Manitoba are part of a society that is governed by federal and provincial laws. Accordingly, school-based disciplinary approaches must operate within the ambits of the law. For this reason, my research found that law and school-based discipline were inextricably linked. However, the findings also indicated that while laws have influenced discipline, they may not necessarily influence school leaders' approaches to discipline. This uninfluenced approach was credited to the positive belief system of the school leaders and accordingly, they were able to guide students positively. Nonetheless, the overall findings demonstrated that school leaders' knowledge of laws were important as they shifted from punitive to positive school-based discipline and that laws had a direct and indirect influence on the transition.

### Legal Awareness

The findings indicated that legal awareness could be helpful for school leaders. The findings also highlighted that legal training may not be necessary because of the legal support that is available at Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS) and in the school divisions through the superintendents' offices. For example, it was mentioned that "MTS offers, usually every year, they call it, kind of, the legal pitfalls of principals" and this professional development opportunity provides school leaders with legal knowledge (School Leader One). However, School Leader Three expressed that "I highly recommend to administrators to do some PD at some point in time in their career based on the law" because it is a necessary component in ensuring effectiveness as a school leader especially in the area of discipline. School Leader Three further stated that "if you are going into administration, one of the courses that you have to take is Administration and the Law," because this course is vital to understanding the relationship between law and education. The understanding of this relationship is extremely important based on the duty of care that is bestowed on school leaders.

### Duty of Care

The law creates a relationship between schools and students where there is a duty of care owed to students at common law. As a result of this fiduciary relationship, the findings indicated that school leaders saw the need to employ positive measures because they are acting in loco parentis (in the place of a parent). In this regard, School Leader One expressed that "you want to make sure that you are again not making a poor choice or decision that could come back to cause problems for the student or problems for you" as a school leader. Additionally, the findings showed that school leaders have a duty of care to ensure students are safe. From this legal responsibility, the results demonstrated that utilizing positive school-based discipline was an

effective approach that contributed to a safe school environment because it creates "a vision of a positive and safe school" (School Leader One). In light of school leaders' belief and duty to keep students safe, corporal punishment was seen as a horrible practice that characterized Canadian history.

**Corporal Punishment: The Foundation Case**

Corporal punishment ended in 2004 and based on that case law, schools in Canada had to desist from utilizing it as a disciplinary approach. In this regard, School Leader Three questioned: "isn't it too bad that it took that long, 2004, to get that off the books?" Accordingly, School Leader Three felt that "that even though corporal punishment may have still been on the books until 2004, that wasn't being used in many schools" and indicated that corporal punishment was not supported from an individual or a professional perspective. Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that residential schools were characterized by corporal punishment; the two terms were inseparable. Students were "totally mistreated" and the impacts are very lasting, even to the present day.

For School Leader Three, "we've experienced it here in this school in terms of the impact of residential schools. I've attended meetings with people and those memories are still vivid and still very real". Therefore, that impact creates negative experiences for Aboriginal parents and grandparents and so, the school may "ignite some of those horrific memories" for individuals (School Leader Three). The ramifications of that school system are seen in abuse (physical, sexual, and mental), drug and alcohol use, and the lack of essential parenting skills because the system separated them (children) from their parents (School Leader Three). The case of residential schools was an indication of how the law influenced discipline because it was legal then to abuse children. Also, the 2004 decision emanating from the *Foundation Case* to end

corporal punishment in schools was one way in which federal laws influence school-based discipline.

### Federal Laws

Federal laws apply to all the Canadian provinces. The findings indicated that some of these laws influenced the school-based discipline in Manitoba. The federal laws identified were the *Criminal Code, the YCJ,* and the *Charter.* The findings showed that these laws either supported positive discipline or stimulated the intervention of the police based on students' behaviour. The findings also indicated that the use of positive discipline can reduce situations in which the involvement of the police may be necessary. For this reason, positive discipline may eliminate student behaviours that may contravene the *Criminal Code*.

**Criminal Code.** The *Criminal Code* outlines what constitutes criminal offences, as well as the procedures relating to those offences. The findings have indicated that behaviours involving drugs, weapons, assault, or theft were major *Criminal Code* violations that required disciplinary responses and police involvement. Accordingly, the *Criminal Code* influenced divisional and school disciplinary policies. The findings also indicated that some school leaders had unintentionally acted as agents of the state by cooperating with peace officers and potentially infringing on the rights of students. These situations had happened early in their careers where they did not have legal awareness. In this regard, School Leader Three expressed "there is a different kind of process or protocol that I would go through now than I would earlier" and this process or protocol was a result of legal awareness.

Additionally, the findings demonstrated that *Criminal Code* violations and situations that may cause school leaders to act as agents of the state had influenced approaches to discipline. As a result, there was a shift from utilizing punitive to positive school-based measures to eliminate

situations of unsafe behaviours involving drugs, weapons, assault, or theft. The findings further indicated that if illegal behaviours are eliminated, then there would be limited situations in which school leaders may act as agents of the state. In describing how positive discipline may eliminate situations in which school leaders act as agent of the state, School Leader One said ". . . if things are going well for all of the students, there probably wouldn't be any issue arising at school that would cause you to have to call the police . . ." Since punitive measures do not eliminate these illegal behaviours, the *Criminal Code* has influenced school leaders to utilize positive disciplinary approaches to create safe school environments and eradicate unsafe behaviours and observe the *YCJA* principles.

**Youth Criminal Justice Act.** The *YCJA* provides youth ages 12 to 17 with certain rights and outlines procedures to be followed when they are charged with an offence. In this regard, the findings further indicated that peace officers should do their jobs without the cooperation of school leaders. For this reason, School Leader One highlighted that school leaders may act as agents of the state "if the [police] is asking you to investigate for them and to do those kinds of things, but hopefully; you don't make that mistake and do that. Let them do the investigation . . ." When asked what happens if a school leader acts as an agent of the state, School Leader One responded "I am not sure but probably a case might fall apart I'm guessing" because rights and procedures under the *Act* were not observed and followed.

Additionally, the findings indicated that the *YCJA* has influenced school-based discipline positively. The *Act* is used as a preventative and positive measure by peace officers to educate students about how the laws change for them once they are 12 years old. For example, "they explain shoplifting and some things that kids might do, and how that affects them, and if I'm with you and you're shoplifting, I can be guilty of enabling that behaviour and so, they talk about

that" (School Leader One). Therefore, similar to the *Criminal Code*, the *YCJA* has influenced school leaders to respond to behaviour challenges that may create situations in which rights and procedures relating to the *Act* may not be observed and followed. In this context, the implementation and use of positive discipline as a preventative approach has reduced circumstances in which students may commit an offence. These eliminated circumstances prevent situations in which rights and procedures under the *Act* may be violated and in so doing, guaranteeing *Charter* rights.

**Charter of Rights and Freedoms.** The *Charter* establishes certain guaranteed rights and freedoms for citizens and permanent residents. The results showed that the *Charter* has influenced how school leaders conceptualized school-based discipline. For this reason, School Leader One expressed that "you're always thinking about being fair and honest and non-discriminatory . . . to student or family based on . . . whether it is race, colour (skin), language, male, female or otherwise" and accordingly, these were characteristics identified with positive school-based discipline. The results further indicated that the use of positive school-based discipline was able to reduce unusual or cruel punishment, unreasonable searches, and arbitrary detentions that are unlawful based on the *Charter.* Based on these contexts, the *Charter* promotes equality, dignity, and respect (School Leader Three) and according to School Leader Three, "it just reinforces what I'm doing or that my belief system is going along the right path. It's not running counter to any one of these documents". As a result, the *Charter* influences school-based disciplinary policies to be inclusive relating to the guaranteed fundamental rights. Some of these rights are further safeguarded through provincial legislations.

**Provincial Laws**

Manitoba has several provincial laws to regulate affairs in the province that are not addressed by federal laws. In this regard, several provincial laws influenced school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. The provincial laws that influenced school leaders' shift were the *PSA,* the *Education Administration Act (EAA),* the *Human Rights Code,* and the *Safe Schools Charter (SSC).* These laws were directly related to education or the rights of individuals. Relating to education and school-based discipline, the findings showed that the *Public Schools Act* had a significant influence.

**Public Schools Act.** The *PSA* is provincial legislation that governs the affairs of public education in Manitoba. The findings indicated that the *PSA* was one of the most influential pieces of legislation on how school-based disciplinary approaches were carried out. The results further highlighted that the *PSA* has not necessarily promoted a shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. However, the *Act* has directly influenced how positive school-based discipline was practiced. For this reason, suspension was still used as a disciplinary measure for some behaviours involving drugs, alcohol, and assault for example. For some school leaders, they were empowered by the *Act* to utilize suspension for those behaviours because the *Act* that feeds division and school policies provided that framework for the behaviours described. The findings also indicated that there were times when school leaders tried to meet the needs of students with behaviour concerns, but suspensions became necessary when the negative behaviours were repeated. In these cases, the school leader had no other option but to follow the division's policy that is aligned with the *PSA.* In this regard, School Leader Three reflected "so, do I always agree with all policies that I am expected to follow? Absolutely, not. But I don't make the policy. But in my role, I am expected to follow it and I will because it's my

professional responsibility". Accordingly, there were times when sections in the *Act* did not align with school leaders' beliefs and values.

Nonetheless, the findings indicated that suspension was an important tool to have as school leaders. In this regard, School Leader One said: "those tools [exclusionary measures] need to be there because there are drugs, violent weapons, assaults, and those kinds of things, and to keep everyone safe, you need to have those there". Therefore, suspension was a necessary measure to utilize in the context of safety concerns because schools have a duty of care in common law to keep students safe. Also, the results showed that some school leaders thought the term "suspension" had a negative connotation to it and clearly outlined that the traditional use of suspension was ineffective and punitive. As a result, School Leader One stated "some of those kids that have some of those severe issues, they're not being helped whether it's in school or through the mental health services in Manitoba or anywhere". For this reason, the results further showed that suspension with interventions was acceptable and necessary to help students with behavioural issues and to prevent chronic situations. However, the findings also indicated that the *Act* did not necessarily convey the use of suspension with interventions.

Consequently, the section of the *PSA* regarding the use of suspension is left to the interpretation of the school leader. For this reason, School Leader Three mentioned: "it's unfortunate if someone takes those Acts [*PSA* and *EAA*] and reinterprets them in their own way to support whether it's further discipline or further punishment" and so indirectly, School Leader Three acknowledged the ambiguous nature of the acts in this context. Also, School Leader One expressed that suspension was not necessarily the first option for an infraction, but rather trying to identify the needs of students and helping them. However, School Leader One said, "I don't want to speak to any other named school divisions, but I mean they may quickly go to that

suspension right away, rather than work through the issues and help the child". Accordingly, School Leader One's comment highlighted how the *Act* enables administrators to only utilize suspension.

Nonetheless, the results also showed that the *Act* gives school leaders the confidence to do their jobs without repercussions (School Leader Three). In this regard, School Leader Three mentioned locker searches as an example and said, "in my own building I have, based on *Public Schools Act* and law, I would say technically I have, more "power than a police officer". I don't need to have a search warrant to search the locker". School Leader Three continued to highlight the support that the *Act* gave by stating "if they [police officers] were to come into my building, they would need to have a search warrant" but the *Act* enables administrators to do their jobs effectively to keep students safe. School Leader Three also pointed out that "of course, I'm not going to search a locker just for the sake of searching a locker. I would have to have some sound knowledge and I would do my homework before I even consider doing that". Accordingly, these were contexts in which the *PSA* had influenced how discipline is practiced in schools.

Additionally, the findings indicated that students do have the right to an education as outlined in the *PSA*. However, that education may not necessarily take place in a school. Consequently, in situations where parents may think that their children have the right to an education, School Leader Three responded "I agree that your child has the right to an education but that education may not necessarily take place here in the building if that student . . . is a threat to students or staff then an alternative . . . programming may be set up". Therefore, where behavioural circumstances present a threat to student and staff safety, then students will be removed via suspension from the school. Again, the findings showed that this was based on the provision afforded to school leaders by the *Act*. Therefore, the *PSA* has impacted the degree to

which positive discipline is utilized in schools based on the duplicitous nature of some of its provisions. The *Act* is also complemented by the *EAA.*

**Education Administration Act.** The *EAA* provides the legal framework in which school administrations should operate. Based on the findings, the *EAA* has not directly influenced how the school leaders utilized positive discipline. However, similar to the *PSA*, it provides principals and teachers with the option of using suspension as a disciplinary measure. Accordingly, it was reiterated that the *EAA* was a framework that guided daily decision-making in terms of discipline. For instance, "when there're difficult situations that come up, you rely on those [*Education Administration Act and Safe Schools Charter*] to give you some guidance and to make sure that you don't do something illegal because it is law" (School Leader One). Therefore, the *EAA* has influenced the way school-based discipline is exercised by affording a disciplinary measure to teachers and school leaders for violations committed by students. Though teachers have the legal authority to suspend students, the findings showed that they were unaware of this provision and that suspensions were utilized by school administrators. However, in administering discipline, school leaders must be fair in light of human rights principles.

**Human Rights Code.** The *Human Rights Code* outlines and provides certain equal rights for persons in Manitoba. The results showed that the *Code* has influenced how discipline is carried out in schools. For this reason, School Leader One mentioned "I can see how that [*Human Rights Code*] would be beneficial to making positive decisions. We don't want to discriminate against anyone based on anything". As a result, the *Code* had influenced the way in which school leaders make decisions relating to disciplinary issues. Accordingly, in a situation where there is a conflict, the rights of both parties must be considered and the findings highlighted that that might mean striking a balance where both parties benefit. Therefore, the

rights of every student are observed when administrators are expected to make disciplinary decisions.

School Leader One shared that at one point, there was a student in the school (Child A) who would go into anaphylactic shock if the student ate peanut butter and so, the school was peanut-free for a while. However, another student (Child B) decided to take peanut butter to school and this decision was supported by his/her parent. After a discussion between School Leader One and the parent, the parent claimed that the fatal allergy was Child A's problem and that Child B had a right to eat. In this disciplinary context, the rights of both parties were considered and the decision was taken that Child B could not have the peanut butter in the classroom but at an alternate place because Child B had rights (School Leader One). Therefore, the *Code* encourages school leaders to balance fairness and inclusion even in light of difficult circumstances. The results also showed that the use of positive discipline complemented the *Code* well, because as found, positive discipline is for everyone. Therefore, the *Human Rights Code* had influenced the way how discipline is exercised, by enabling school leaders to promote a culture of inclusion and equity and protecting students from discrimination based on protected characteristics. Therefore, the schools' codes of conduct must ensure that students are safe from harm and discrimination and the *SSC* requires these contexts.

**Safe Schools Charter.** The *SSC* ensures that schools provide a safe and caring environment for all students. Accordingly, schools are expected to establish a code of conduct that ensures that students are safe. The findings indicated that punitive discipline may not necessarily achieve this safe and caring environment based on the recidivism rate and the lack of support and intervention for students with behavioural problems. However, the utilization of positive discipline can prevent behavioural issues that may create an unsafe school environment.

The results also showed that the *SSC* was a valuable resource that guided school leaders and helped them to avoid legal problems. Additionally, the utilization of positive discipline complemented the *Charter* well, because of similar objectives to provide a safe, supporting, and caring environment where students can thrive academically. Furthermore, the results revealed that the *SSC* was the closest piece of legislation to a positive school-based disciplinary framework. Therefore, the *SSC* provided a guide for school leaders who were shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline, and the guidelines, coupled with their positive belief, fuelled the transition.

Based on the findings, laws had influenced school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. For this reason, School Leader Three stated: "the law impacts on the discipline I have to do because if it impacts on this environment" and therefore, laws created either a direct or indirect influence on school leaders' shifts. Laws such as the *Criminal Code and YCJA* directly influenced divisional and school-based disciplinary policies. However, laws also supported the shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. The *YCJA* was used proactively to support positive discipline in schools. The *Charter* and *Human Rights Code* support positive school-based discipline by encouraging inclusion based on guaranteed fundamental rights and protected characteristics respectively.

The use of suspension as a disciplinary measure remains a gray area, existing between the punitive as well as the positive disciplinary realm. For school leaders, what made the use of suspensions positive or negative related to the manner in which the suspension was utilized; suspension with interventions or suspension without interventions. Nonetheless, though the findings indicated that supports or interventions for students were not always readily available and adequate, some laws support school leaders' use of suspension as a disciplinary measure.

Given this context, the law has directly influenced the shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline by inhibiting the rate at which the transition journey took place. The laws that inhibited school leaders' shifts were the *PSA* and *EAA* by affording suspension without intervention as a tool for principals and teachers respectively.

In this chapter, I presented the findings obtained from school leaders for the two research questions. Regarding question one, the role of the school and discipline set the stage for school leaders to transition. The transition was further supported by motivating factors that push and pull school leaders to shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. The negative impacts associated with punitive discipline on students' behaviour, academic performance, relationships, and the community were identified as push factors. The benefits associated with the use of positive discipline relating to students' behaviour, academic performance, relationships, and inclusion were identified as pull factors. This shift was described as a journey and school leaders started this journey at different points. The journey took time and was characterized by maintenance, assessment, challenges, and responses. Relating to question two, law and school-based discipline were inextricably linked. There were federal laws that influenced school-based discipline; *Criminal Code*, *YCJA*, and the *Charter*. There were also provincial laws that impacted school-based discipline; *PSA*, *EAA*, *Human Rights Code*, and the *SSC*. Federal and provincial laws either supported or inhibited school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. In the next chapter, I provide a discussion of the findings. The discussion will include a triangulation of the findings with the literature review and the remaining participants of the study. For this reason, I acknowledge that with the process of imaginative variation "there is not a single inroad to truth, but that countless possibilities emerge

that are intimately connected with the essences and meanings of an experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 99).

# Chapter Five: Discussion of Findings

This phenomenological study had two main purposes related to "A Shift in Paradigm from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline". Accordingly, this chapter provides a direct discussion of the two research questions that guided the data collection process: 1) How do school leaders experience the paradigm shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline? 2) How might federal and provincial laws influence school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline? The discussion centres on the comparison of findings presented in Chapter Four with the literature review, as well as, the triangulation of school leaders' experiences from the remaining participants of the study who were very close to the phenomenon.

## Question 1: How do School Leaders' Experience the Paradigm Shift from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline?

The findings indicated that school leaders have not suddenly experienced a paradigm shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. The shift has started many years ago for some school leaders, but for others, they do not consider themselves to have ever been punitive at all. Although the latter group of school leaders was of this view, the findings also indicated that they have employed a punitive measure, for example, suspension. Nonetheless, the findings showed that school leaders experienced a shift in paradigm from punitive to positive school-based discipline based on several factors. These factors included the role of the school and discipline in students' lives, their belief systems, and motivating factors that were identified as either negative or positive push and pull factors. After considering these factors, school leaders embarked on a journey to shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. For school leaders, the role of the school was significant to the shift because the school should prepare

students for adulthood. Also, the type of disciplinary measure utilized by school leaders, punitive or positive, may determine how the school fulfills its role.

**Role of the School**

The role of the school was a great factor in school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. The findings showed that school leaders believed that the school had the social responsibility of preparing students for adulthood to be productive citizens. This notion is consistent with the view that educational institutions are seen as one of the primary agents of socialization. Based on school leaders' experiences, punitive discipline did not enable the school to effectively fulfill this social responsibility based on unsolved behavioural issues. Accordingly, there was a need to shift to a disciplinary approach that could fix behavioural issues and teach problem-solving skills, and simultaneously ensure that students were academically prepared for adulthood. For this reason, discipline had a role in how the school educated and prepared students for adulthood.

**Role of Discipline**

The role of discipline was a contributing factor to school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. The findings from school leaders showed that discipline should teach rather than punish students. Therefore, the utilization of disciplinary measures should provide students with the opportunity to learn from their mistakes, reflect, and prevent similar behaviours from repeating. These characteristics were consistent with Behaviour Consultant One's response regarding the role of discipline in students' lives. Behaviour Consultant One expressed that:

> The definition of discipline is to teach. That's what a disciplinary measure should do, teach. I think punishment has a very limited ability to teach. It can teach that a situation is

> serious, but I think that's about all punishment can teach. It doesn't teach you anything about how to fix it, how to repair it, and how to prevent it from happening in the future. That's what a disciplinary practice should be; it should be very focused on helping kids to reflect on what happened, why it happened, and how to handle it better if it comes up again.

Therefore, for school leaders to experience the shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline, they had to understand the true sense of the word discipline and what it meant to truly discipline a student. For this reason, the findings supported the premise that discipline teaches students life skills that can be utilized in every stage of their development as an individual. Most importantly, discipline was seen as a "tool for reflection, not control" of students' behaviour. This notion was shared by the majority of the participants of the study. Furthermore, it can be interpreted from the findings that the role of the school and discipline were two inextricably linked themes. Accordingly, the school has a role to ensure that students are socialized to be productive citizens and school-based discipline is an opportunity to prepare students to become productive citizens as well, without controlling behaviour. However, based on the analysis, punitive discipline did not effectively support the role of school and discipline for students' overall development.

**Punitive Discipline**

Based on the findings, punitive discipline affects students physically, emotionally and/or psychologically (School Leader One). Punitive discipline is currently manifested through exclusionary measures. For Teacher One, the exclusionary measures included "removing kids from class, suspensions and taking away things . . ." for unacceptable behaviour. Similar exclusionary measures were also mentioned by Behaviour Consultant One such as students being

excluded from recess, sports and special events such as pizza parties and school dances. Behaviour Consultant One further stated that ". . . I definitely saw kids that were suspended from school, kids that were put into isolation because they couldn't be in the classroom. They had to work by themselves and sometimes not in very nice places." These were some of the exclusionary measures utilized that affected students negatively.

Similarly, the examples of exclusionary measures expressed by Teacher One and Behaviour Consultant One, were also shared by some school leaders and found in the Manitoba Provincial Code of Conduct. According to the Code of Conduct, students can be removed from the classrooms "where specific student conduct is deemed to have a negative impact upon the classroom learning environment, the student is withdrawn to a supervised alternate location to complete his or her assignment" (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017b, p. 6). The Provincial Code further stated that certain privileges can be taken away by excluding students from "the playground, cafeteria, library, extracurricular activities, and/or bus transportation . . ." (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017b, p. 6) for specific misbehaviour. However, based on the findings, if these punitive measures are solely utilized, unacceptable behaviour will not be improved. For this reason, the findings pointed out that punitive discipline was seen as revengeful or hurtful approach (School Leader Three) in response to misbehaviour. This aligns with Green, Maynard, and Stegenga's (2018) findings that exclusionary measures (punitive measures) "tend to satisfy the punisher and [have] little lasting effects on the punished" (p. 421) and accordingly, these measures did not solve the problem but created either further behavioural and/or academic problems.

Though the negative effects of punitive measures were identified, suspension, traditionally viewed as a punitive approach, was deemed beneficial by some participants. In this

regard, suspension was seen as a respite for teachers and a tool used to send the message that unacceptable behaviours will not be tolerated. Relating to the former benefit, Teacher One felt that suspension was sometimes necessary to "diffuse the situation that happened at school" but it should not be utilized as a tool for punishment. Additionally, Behaviour Consultant One shared that a lot of staff were of the view that a suspension gave them a "break". However, Behaviour Consultant One also stated that ". . . for a child, they might feel like it's [break/suspension] the end of their life" because of the sense of hopelessness (Behaviour Consultant One). Accordingly, there should be an awareness of not creating further damage to the students (Behaviour Consultant One).

With regards to suspension being used as a tool to send the message that inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated, Behaviour Consultant One mentioned that:

> I think there has to be a bottom-line so I'm not against suspension at all. I think that there is a place for that. The benefit to punishment is that it gives a really clear message to everybody when something has really crossed the line.

Although this benefit was acknowledged, Behaviour Consultant One also pointed out in the same response that suspension was a secondary step. Consequently, Behaviour Consultant One expressed that:

> But what I'm really worried about is why did this happen and how we are going to fix it . . . What was the need you were trying to get met and how can we meet that in better ways so that we don't end up in this problem again? To me, that's the most important work that we have to do. But I do think that there is a place for consequences.

School leaders felt that there should be consequences for inappropriate behaviour. As a result, there was an interesting finding regarding how suspension was used and viewed.

The data showed that there were two forms of suspension; suspension with interventions and suspension without interventions. The former was seen as a positive form of discipline where the student is removed from the classroom or school and given the necessary supports. These supports will enable the students to return to the group strengthened and with the hope of the negative behaviour not recurring. However, suspension without intervention, that is, excluding the student from the school without any support was viewed by administrators as punitive discipline that could damage the student academically and personally. The data also suggested that some students were able to get the necessary interventions or supports. These students were generally from a smaller school or division. However, participating school leaders implied that larger schools and divisions may find that suspended students are not given the necessary supports or interventions if those resources are limited. In those cases, students were referred to facilities for support with a long waiting period based on the number of cases. Therefore, it was deduced that there were times that students returned to school from a suspension without the necessary interventions or supports. Although the findings did show that there were re-entry meetings, these may not have been enough to ensure that students returned to the group strengthened based on supports provided after the unacceptable behaviour.

Based on the results relating to suspension with or without interventions, it can be juxtaposed to the progressive discipline model in Ontario. The progressive discipline model in Ontario is a legislated provincial approach that uses a range of preventative programs and supports for unacceptable conduct and to build and foster positive conduct (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 3). For this reason, when a student is suspended for inappropriate conduct, there are legislated supports that should be given to the student such as a homework package, board plan (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 3), or “both an academic and non-academic

component" (Roher, 2009, p. 14) based on the number of suspended days. However, Roher (2009) also expressed that suspended students "require significant additional resources to ensure there are a number of locations and a range of academic and non-academic supports to meet the needs of individual students" (p. 14). The absence of those supports made the progressive model punitive.

Similarly, if suspended students in Manitoba are not given the requisite support, then suspension will remain a punitive and damaging measure. Peace Officer One was also of the view that suspending students and sending them home was not the answer and will not make the situation better. Accordingly, Peace Officer One expressed that "so yes, there have to be interventions but where are the resources? There aren't any resources. There's no money, there's no funding . . ." Peace Officer One further stated that the institutions that were there to help students with severe cases or chronic behaviour were "full" and therefore, it was easier to send the students home to sometimes keep the other students safe (Peace Officer One). Behaviour Consultant One also shared similar sentiments. Behaviour Consultant One was of the view that those interventions and supports that are needed will be dependent on the "priorities as a society [government]" and how it decides to allocate money. Consequently, it was logical that in the absence of psychological and external academic supports and interventions, for example, the "suspension with intervention" approach reverted to the traditional context in which suspension is viewed and utilized and therefore, there are no opportunities for growth and behavioural improvements.

**Impacts of punitive discipline on students' behaviour.** There was a consensus by school leaders that punitive discipline did not improve behaviour. It was acknowledged by some that the behaviour might change for a short period; however, it was highly likely that these

behaviours would be repeated. For this reason, Peace Officer One also agreed that students "re-offend" when suspension was utilized. Peace Officer One went further and described the context as a "cycle, a vicious cycle" because students were not being helped. The inability for punitive discipline to improve or prevent inappropriate behaviour was also echoed by Teacher One. Accordingly, Teacher One stated that "I think that it [punitive discipline] does not change a student's behaviour" and therefore, punitive discipline was ineffective as a disciplinary approach.

Additionally, the data also indicated that when punitive measures were utilized, it can lead to detrimental circumstances because it did not improve or prevent negative behaviours. Accordingly, the Tina Fontaine case was discussed with participants as an example in this regard. Tina Fontaine was an Indigenous 15 year-old girl from Sagkeeng First Nation in Manitoba. She died in August 2014 while under the care of Manitoba Child and Family Services. Tina's death reiterated demands for a federal inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. As a result, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) was actualized on September 1, 2016 (Conn, 2019). The use of suspension may have contributed to Tina's death (Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, 2019, p. 58). The report published by Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY) outlined that "Tina was suspended on April 16, 2014, for being under the influence of cannabis while at school. The school record includes a "Letter of Level 3- suspension" and described that this was her second offence" (p. 60). The exclusionary and punitive measure was also corroborated by a social worker's report that mentioned that "Tina continued to have a difficult year this year, and was suspended or sent home several times" (MACY, 2019, p. 60). Therefore,

it was shown that punitive discipline is a systemic failure that can be extremely detrimental to students.

In relating to the result that punitive discipline did not improve behaviour, Hannigan and Hannigan (2016) made the following comparison:

> An administrator who only uses suspension to discipline is akin to a teacher who uses only one strategy to teach a child to read. When the student does not respond, the teacher continues to use the same approach hoping for different results; using this approach will produce a child who cannot read. Similarly, using only suspension as a means to teach behavior will produce a child who does not behave. (p. 40)

Therefore, suspension was seen as an ineffective way of improving conduct. Additionally, punitive discipline can contribute to "disengagement from school and consequent exacerbation of harmful behaviours" (MACY, 2019, p. 60) that was ultimately detrimental to Tina personally and academically. Logically, based on the negative effects of punitive discipline on students, school leaders were motivated and pushed to shift to positive school-based discipline. It was also indicated that with poor student behaviour, low academic achievement was inevitable.

**Impacts of punitive discipline on students' academic performance.** The data revealed that based on school leaders' experience, punitive discipline was associated with low student achievement. In this regard, when Teacher One was asked "given your knowledge, how would you describe the impact of punitive measures on students' academic performance", Teacher One responded that:

> It would not improve it [academic performance] at all. I think it would probably make it worse. From my experience, when kids receive punitive consequences, they aren't ready

> to come back to class in a good state of mind to be working on academics. They don't feel good. So, if you don't feel good, you are not going to perform well.

Accordingly, Teacher One's response supported the experiences shared by school leaders. Additionally, it was purported by Perry and Morris (2014) that punitive measures ". . . over time are associated with poorer student achievement . . . and may actually exacerbate hostile conditions that lead to lower academic achievements" (p. 1081). Therefore, the negative impact of punitive discipline on academic performance was a motivating factor to shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. Furthermore, based on the trajectory of the negative effects, punitive discipline was also detrimental to relationships.

**Impacts of punitive discipline on relationships.** The results revealed that based on school leaders' experience, punitive discipline affected relationships. For this reason, relationships between school leaders and students and/or teachers and students were affected negatively. This notion of relationship-damage was also confirmed by Teacher One who mentioned that punitive discipline "impacts greatly on the relationship that you do have with the student either being a teacher or an administrator." Similarly, Behaviour Consultant One, in explaining the impact of punitive discipline on relationships, reiterated that punitive discipline damaged the relationship between the educators in the school and students. Additionally, Behaviour Consultant One also noted that such relationship-damage led to a lack of cooperation, anger, a sense of not "being treated fairly", and/or being "misunderstood". Accordingly, "if you don't have a good relationship with your student, that student is going to be at risk of academic difficulties on top of the behavioural problems" (Behaviour Consultant One). Also, Behaviour Consultant One expressed that punitive discipline negatively affected the relationship between educators and the family. This relationship break-down may also negatively affect the

community. Therefore, the importance of relationships played a vital role in motivating or pushing school leaders to shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. The negative effects associated with punitive discipline were also found in the community.

**Impacts of punitive discipline on the community.** The data demonstrated that some school leaders experienced that punitive discipline had a negative impact on the community. As a result, some social and financial problems were highlighted in the findings. Similarly, this experience was shared by Peace Officer One who stated some of the social problems associated with suspension. In this regard, Peace Officer One expressed that suspension, a form of punitive discipline, affected the community because " . . . between Monday and Friday and 8:30 am and 3:30 pm, you have kids that should be in school running around and shoplifting, stealing bikes, and in the community doing nothing but causing problems; tagging, spray painting . . ."

Additionally, Behaviour Consultant One echoed some of the negative effects of punitive discipline on the community. In relating these effects, Behaviour Consultant One mentioned: "I remember one teacher saying to me, you know if we suspend the child, he is not in my classroom anymore but what's happening is while I'm here teaching, he is at my house breaking in and stealing my TV". The comments demonstrated that suspension was an approach that may result in other issues for the community and reveal negative perceptions of students. Labelling a student as a potential "criminal" highlights the need for this shift from punitive to positive discipline. Accordingly, these analyses reiterated the premise that the shift is not a linear journey, and educators may require learning to align themselves with this new reality. Also, it was echoed that if students were "pushed" away, then they will not feel a sense of belonging (Behaviour Consultant One). It was further expressed by Behaviour Consultant One that when students did not feel they belong ". . . then that's when kids get into gangs, that's when kids get into drugs

because they've got no hope and nothing that they can do . . ." These findings support the claim made by Hannigan and Hannigan (2016) that students who are suspended regularly are likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system (p.40).

The data also pointed to the correlation between suspension and school shootings. It was mentioned that there were times when school shootings were carried out by students who were suspended (School Leader One). Additionally, the Columbine and Taber school shootings were highlighted by School Leader Three where it was mentioned that interventions such as laws were put in place following these events. In this regard, Behaviour Consultant One said that "I think the other thing that research has been really clear on is when you look at the data around school shootings, for example, most of those, the trigger is a suspension". Again, Behaviour Consultant One highlighted that if despair was created, ". . . that's when you have people get suicidal, or you get people act out and become school shooters, or those people that have really serious mental health issues. . ." Accordingly, these issues associated with punitive discipline negatively affected the community; the school, families, and other community institutions.

The findings indicated that punitive discipline was detrimental to students' development. The discourse of utilizing suspension for safety reasons also placed students at a disadvantage when they were not given the requisite supports to meet their needs. Punitive discipline did not improve students' behaviour and unacceptable behaviours were usually repeated. Since punitive discipline did not improve students' behaviour, it also negatively affected students' academic performance. Punitive discipline was also detrimental to relationships because it resulted in a lack of cooperation and anger that affected students' academic achievement. Additionally, punitive discipline was perceived to create financial and social problems for the community.

Therefore, the negative impacts associated with punitive discipline were motivating factors for school leaders to shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline.

## Positive Discipline

The use of positive discipline was a motivating pull factor for school leaders to shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. The approach creates a positive school environment where guidelines or expectations are utilized as opposed to rules, a notion that was also shared by Behaviour Consultant One. As a result, Behaviour Consultant One stated that "I think the problem with rules is that they are forced on you. It tends to work better if we talk about agreements that we make together". Therefore, a positive school climate was created when students were a part of the conversations in shaping guidelines and expectations. However, "anytime we tell somebody what they have to do, there's kind of an automatic human response to push back; that you can't 'make me'" (Behaviour Consultant One). Hence, positive discipline creates an environment where "push back" is limited and ideally, non-existent based on students' involvement. Similarly, Watchel et al. (2010), as cited in Payne and Welch (2018), pointed out that ''human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to or for them'' (p. 226). Consequently, students' involvement is vital to the success of positive discipline. The success of positive discipline is also hinged on the school leader's belief system.

### The importance of the leader's belief system in implementing positive discipline.

Similar to school leaders' experiences, Teacher One also shared that positive discipline was a belief system. For this reason, Teacher One said, "I think it's [positive discipline] based on a belief system. It is based on a belief system that positive measures build connections with kids,

and the kids that are connected do better". Hence, building connections with students was added to the premise purported by school leaders that there is good in everyone. Accordingly, if there is good in everyone then it was quite fitting that mistakes were viewed as an opportunity to learn. Therefore, students do well based on this basic belief of positive discipline that ". . . mistakes are opportunities to learn; that mistakes aren't bad" (Behaviour Consultant One). As a result, students can learn from their mistakes in a manner that prevents humiliation and/or alienation. Though these basic beliefs are important, the findings indicated that relationship played a vital role in the success of positive discipline. Therefore, school leaders must believe in building and maintaining relationships and connections with students. For this reason, the results showed that positive discipline is a belief system that is heavily dependent on relationships with students, families, and educators.

**The importance of relationships to the success of positive discipline.** The importance of relationships to the success of positive discipline cannot be overstated. Based on the findings, relationship was one of the most fundamental aspects of positive discipline. As a result, Peace Officer One expressed that:

> That's [building a relationship with students] my entire job; 100 percent. If I can't build a relationship with each child, each whole classroom that I talk to, and be able to communicate with them in a way that they understand, I might as well just stay home.

Therefore, through good relationships, school leaders and school practitioners were able to solve problems. In this regard, Teacher One mentioned "we try to build relationships with kids and that helps us to mediate the problems that they are having" and this helped to prevent further issues. It was also pointed out by Teacher One that building a good relationship with students required a non-academic space as well. For this reason, Teacher One highlighted activities such as special

trips, coaching games, recognizing students for their strengths, and the breakfast program. These activities enabled school leaders and staff members to build relationships with students through communication and spending time with students (Teacher One).

Consequently, positive discipline emphasizes students as individuals through relationships. Vaandering (2014) described restorative justice, a positive disciplinary approach, as a ". . . philosophical foundation that emphasizes the inherent worth and well-being of all people [and] the belief that humans are 'profoundly relational' . . ." (p. 64). Therefore, individuals are connected through relationships and this type of connection gives them a sense of belonging. Feeling a sense of belonging is an important aspect of an individual's life. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, feeling loved and a sense of belonging are essential factors before an individual can achieve self-actualization (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018, p. 121). The importance of belonging was also supported by the Circle of Courage theory. Consequently, individuals "without a sense of Belonging may find themselves craving attention, engaging in risky . . . behaviors, or joining a gang to meet the need for connections" (Brendtro, Mitchell, & Jackson, 2014, p. 10). Accordingly, students need to feel connected and a sense of belonging to function well academically and behaviourally. However, based on the findings, punitive discipline creates distance, a sense of alienation, and damages relationships. Hence, through relationships, positive discipline recognizes students' individuality based on the belief system that there is good in everyone. Therefore, enabling students to attain self-actualization (preparing students to be productive citizens and for adulthood) was recognized as one of the roles of the school. To create opportunities for self-actualization, different positive disciplinary approaches were utilized.

**Types of positive approaches utilized by leaders implementing positive discipline.** The findings indicated that positive discipline is a belief system. This belief system was based on the notion that there is good in everyone, everyone makes mistakes, and mistakes are an opportunity to learn. Accordingly, positive discipline can be associated with a number of disciplinary models based on its flexible nature. For these reasons, school leaders were able to utilize at least two of the following models:

***PAX.*** The school leaders who utilized PAX identified some of the strengths associated with the model. These strengths were identified as an emphasis on self-regulating, good decision-making, building resiliency in students, increasing instructional time, positively influencing mental health and wellbeing, improving academic performance (School Leader One), and meeting students' need for fun and power (School Leader Two). Based on these strengths that were associated with the model, improved behaviour was recognized through the PAX Good Behaviour Game (PAX GBG). For these reasons, confidence was expressed in the PAX model. As a result, School Leader One said:

> I trust Dr. Embry [Senior Scientist at PAXIS Institute] and the school division that these things are working well and again, the research is thorough if you look at the results. You talked about the [school to] prison pipeline, if you read up on it, the smoking rates and the prison rates, all of that stuff is shown to be significantly improved with kids that have gone through at least one year of PAX. So, that's why we're doing it.

Therefore, PAX GBG ". . . helps students manage their behavior and regulate their emotions. After achieving self-regulation in that setting, those same children are less likely to travel down a potentially dangerous road" (Gelfand, 2018). The "potentially dangerous road[s]" were

associated with the school to prison pipeline and smoking. However, PAX was credited for reducing these behavioural issues and improving student achievement.

Nonetheless, the PAX approach was not always viewed favourably based on the experience of other participants of the study. PAX was seen as a measure for controlling students' behaviour based on a "rewards-punishment" system as opposed to self-regulation that is guided by control theory (School Leader Two). Control theory was put forward by William Glasser and the theory claimed that "behavior is never caused by a response to an outside stimulus . . . [but] that behavior is inspired by what a person wants most at that given time . . ." (Control Theory, 2011, para. 1) Therefore, it can be inferred that PAX was seen as an "outside stimulus" trying to change behaviour, based on School Leader Two's response. For Glasser, "teachers who attempt to motivate resistant students to follow the rules and/or to work harder by doing something to or for those students will almost always fail to get the desired results over any period of time" (Glasser, 1985, p. 241). Accordingly, the "desired results" which is translated to good behaviour and increased academic achievement, will not be achieved because "students do not get involved in long-term learning because they are threatened or rewarded by teachers" (Glasser, 1985, p. 241). Though these stimuli may work for a short period, similar to the findings surrounding punitive discipline, they are never life changing. Accordingly, students must have that intrinsic motivation to do good because it is the right thing to do and they must find that satisfying as opposed to a rewards-punishment approach as PAX.

The results further indicated that PAX was for younger children (School Leader Two). This claim can be supported by virtue of School Leader One being an elementary school administrator for over 12 years in Manitoba who has had a positive experience with the PAX model. Additionally, the claim can be further supported by Streimann, Selart and Trummal

(2019) where only first-grade teachers from primary schools were recruited as participants for their study (p. 235). Based on these contexts, it would appear that the PAX GBG may not be a suitable disciplinary approach for older or high school students. This premise was based on findings that indicated that some of the PAX activities were considered "silly". For this reason, Teacher One stated: "so, I've not implemented it [PAX GBG] a 100 percent . . . because there are certain families that don't want their kids participating in silly things at school". Accordingly, Teacher One was not using all the PAX kernels, including the Granny Wacky Prize and playing the games (Teacher One). Consequently, based on some of the contexts regarding the PAX approach, it was not always seen as an ideal approach for changing students' behaviour. Since those challenges were identified, other disciplinary approaches such as restitution were utilized.

***Restitution.*** Restitution is a disciplinary approach that fits well with the beliefs of positive discipline based on school leaders' experiences. Behaviour Consultant One reiterated that restitution was based on control theory. Behaviour Consultant One further highlighted that "control theory is based on the idea that everybody has five basic needs and that everybody's behaviour exists to meet these needs". Accordingly, the approach enables students to meet their needs for "love and belonging, power, freedom, fun, and survival" and therefore, all behaviours are deemed "purposeful" (Real Restitution, 2020). For this reason, "often a behavior you see as disruptive is simply another person trying to meet their needs in the best way possible" (Real Restitution, 2020). Based on this premise, mistakes are seen as learning opportunities where students can fix or solve the problem and thereafter, do it independently (Behaviour Consultant One). For this reason, the restitution model helps to prepare students for adulthood. This conclusion correlated with the findings regarding the role of school and discipline in students' lives. The former was to prepare students for adulthood and the latter, was to teach rather than

punish. Therefore, how restitution is conceptualized and utilized are important to the educational effectiveness of the approach.

The educational context of restitution was very different from how it is utilized in the criminal justice system. In the criminal justice context, restitution is “an order for the compensation of a victim's loss” (Smith, 2013) and is used in a punitive way. Based on Behaviour Consultant One’s experience, the judicial use of restitution was not about “trying to meet people’s needs; it’s still about punishment”. This type of use was similar to the traditional use of restorative justice as previously described by Leung (2001) in the Introduction, where I categorically stated that schools should operate differently from a criminal justice system relating to restorative justice. Diane Gossen is credited with the educational context of restitution. Gossen’s roots are planted in control theory as proposed by William Glasser as she was “a senior trainer at the Glasser Institute” (Behaviour Consultant One). Based on the findings of the study and the restitution model purported by Diane Gossen, there was a clear difference between the educational and criminal context of restitution.

Within the educational context, in schools where restitution is the focus, students agree on the type of environment that they want and how they would like to be treated. This agreement is described as a social contract (Real Restitution, 2020) and serves as a guide for students. In this specific context, restitution is seen as a preventative rather than reactive disciplinary measure. Accordingly, restitution is a way of life where students are “guided rather than being guilted or punished” (Real Restitution, 2020) and this was a sentiment also shared by School Leader Two. For this reason, if behaviour is deemed inappropriate, students should be supported to meet their respective needs in a better way. The restitution approach encourages educators to stabilize the identity, seek the beliefs, and validate the needs of students (Gossen, 2007, p. 20).

Accordingly, understanding that mistakes are learning opportunities, connecting to the students' beliefs, and acknowledging that there is a reason for inappropriate behaviours, are necessary actions to support students and encourage the restitution way of life. This way of life was illustrated in an experience shared by Behaviour Consultant One who said "in some schools, I've seen it implemented really well. One of my favourite examples was from a friend of mine who was a principal". This principal started utilizing restitution and found that students went to the office voluntarily when they did something wrong. However, before the use of restitution, the office was seen as a place for punishment as opposed to a "place you go to for help in figuring things out and making things better" (Behaviour Consultant One). Behaviour Consultant One further shared that:

> Kids would come themselves and say "I had a fight with my friend at recess time and we need help to sort this out". This is the shift to me. It's when you see people not afraid of being reported or being in trouble. It's not that you're bad; it's that you're having a problem and we fix problems.

Therefore, restitution should become a habitual process that prevents issues from happening and also prepares students to deal with future issues.

In preparing students to deal with future issues, the restitution model also strengthens students in areas such as communication, creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration (Real Restitution, 2020). These attributes are viewed as essential skills that are needed by individuals to function daily. Based on the findings, restitution also taught students that there are consequences (bottom-lines) for inappropriate action. Nonetheless, the consequences do not have to be punitive. For Behaviour Consultant One, "the benefit to punishment is that it gives a really clear message to everybody when something has really crossed the line". However,

"punishment" does not teach and for this reason, positive consequences work well with the philosophy of restitution. Furthermore, based on the beliefs relating to restitution, it aligns well with the Seven Teachings. For this reason, Behaviour Consultant One stated that "the roots of restitution actually lie in the Seven Teachings. Diane Gossen was working in Northern Saskatchewan and learning from Indigenous people when she was developing the ideas behind restitution". Behaviour Consultant One also explained that similar to the Seven Teachings, restitution is about respect and honesty. Behaviour Consultant One highlighted that honesty is important: "if you are honest, we can fix the problem." Hence, based on those findings, there is a strong connection or interrelatedness with restitution and the Seven Teachings.

***Seven teachings.*** The Seven Teachings were used as an approach to discipline that complemented the fundamental beliefs of positive discipline as demonstrated in the findings of this study. Wisdom is seen as the teaching that guides "the people to use their knowledge and expertise to help one another" (Native Reflections, 2015, p. 5). In this regard, positive discipline teaches students to learn from their mistakes and to become stronger. If students are learning, then it can be deduced that they are becoming wiser. They are better prepared to deal with difficult situations based on experience. Love is seen as the teaching that enables people to care for others and share with them (Native Reflections, 2015, p. 7). Accordingly, if students have love and care for each other and others, they can help each other as opposed to hurt each other. Respect is the teaching that enables "people to honor each other" (Native Reflections, 2015, p. 9) and with positive discipline, students are treated with dignity; they should never be humiliated.

Courage is another teaching that encourages individuals "to be brave when facing obstacles, even in the most difficult situations" (Native Reflections, 2015, p. 11) and this teaching is necessary for you to be honest (another teaching) – "to be honest in every action . . ."

(Native Reflections, 2015, p. 13). Positive discipline is about fixing the problem. Therefore, if students are brave enough, to be honest, then adults are better able to help students solve the problem and help them to meet their respective needs. Humility is the teaching that demonstrates to individuals that they are all "equal" (Native Reflections, 2015, p. 15). Positive discipline also fosters inclusion based on the belief that there is good in everybody. Truth is the seventh teaching and encourages persons to "be true to themselves and to each other" (Native Reflections, 2015, p. 17). It can be interpreted from the findings that with positive discipline, truth enables students to find inner strength and motivation. Based on these contexts, School Leader Three explained that the Teachings were used to determine "how we want to treat one another". There were conversations that gave students the "opportunity to share their ideas on what those Teachings look, feel, and sound like, and then they post them on the wall" (School Leader Two). School Leader Two further explained that these postings were a "general consensus" of how they want to create a positive culture in their school.

Accordingly, the Seven Teachings enable "people to learn and find the answers within themselves as opposed to being externally controlled" (Behaviour Consultant One). It was also expressed by Behaviour Consultant One that positive discipline can be a "life-changing" experience. For this reason, Behaviour Consultant One mentioned that:

> When discipline is teaching kids a better way, you don't have them doing the same thing over and over again. It helps them to become problem-solvers. It helps with their self-esteem and confidence; they can feel proud and confident that they are a good person.

As a result, use of the Seven Teachings creates "a respectful environment where students are treated with respect and are given opportunities to learn from their mistakes without a lot of shame or guilt and which isn't always the case when punitive measures are used" (School Leader

Two). Therefore, the Seven Teachings utilized as a disciplinary approach was a strength-based one that emphasized dignity through its teachings.

***Discipline with dignity.*** Discipline with dignity is a positive disciplinary approach that emphasizes that students should be treated with respect even when their behaviour was inappropriate (Curwin, Mendler & Mendler, 2018, p. 4). The approach also encourages the use of intrinsic motivation to improve students' behaviour. Consequently, "there has always been a strong link between discipline and motivation, but most educators need to know specific ways to awaken motivation in today's 'difficult' students without resorting to rewards and punishments" (Curwin, Mendler & Mendler, 2018, p. 3). Rewards and punishments are seen as strategies used to control students' behaviour. Curwin, Mendler and Mendler (2018) purported that "managing student behavior is not easy" based on the challenges associated with meeting the needs of the group and each student (p. 5). However, they believe that "discipline should focus on teaching and learning rather than retribution or punishment" (Curwin, Mendler & Mendler, 2018, p. 5). This is based on the notion that "students are the consumers of education and school should prepare them to flourish and be responsible in choosing their own life destiny" (Curwin, Mendler & Mendler, 2018, p. 5). This notion also correlated with the research findings related to the role of the school and discipline in the lives of students.

Accordingly, discipline with dignity as a disciplinary approach prepares students for adulthood. It teaches students problem-solving skills and how to make good decisions. Curwin, Mendler and Mendler (2018) also emphasized that these skills are as important as learning a subject's content (p. 6). For them, "good manners and proper social skills continue to stand the test of time. Content changes" (Curwin, Mendler & Mendler, 2018, p. 6). In this regard, the following example was used: "how many planets are in the solar system?" (Curwin, Mendler &

Mendler, 2018, p. 6). It was expressed that the answer to this question is always changing (Curwin, Mendler & Mendler, 2018, p. 6). However, it was highlighted that "the value of solving problems without hurting others has been stable for centuries" (Curwin, Mendler & Mendler, 2018, p. 6). Consequently, discipline with dignity is a strength-based approach that encourages the use of social skills, responsible thinking, respect, collaboration, relationship, problem-solving and decision-making skills to position students for present and future success.

Based on the findings relating to the different positive approaches utilized by school leaders, the models are moving away from the use of punitive measures. Each of the school leaders who participated in this study utilizes at least two of the approaches, to try and build resilient students. Resiliency is built on the shared core value of positive discipline that everybody makes mistakes and mistakes are learning opportunities. With the use of positive discipline, "we are giving the kids the skills so they don't need us anymore. They can solve their own problems. The impact is huge because knowing how to solve problems will affect every relationship a child has in their life" (Behaviour Consultant One). Behaviour Consultant One's statement reiterated the need for discipline to prepare students for adulthood. These life skills are as a result of the emphasis placed on intrinsic as opposed to extrinsic motivation when positive discipline is being utilized. However, the findings showed that components of the PAX model are not always aligned to school leaders' beliefs about positive discipline. From the findings, it can be inferred that the PAX model emphasizes extrinsic motivation based on the reward system associated with the model. Nonetheless, for the positive disciplinary approaches to be successful, the use of language is very important.

**The importance of language when implementing positive discipline.** School leaders maintained that language and tone were important for the effective use of positive discipline.

This finding was supported by Teacher One who also stated that both language and tone are important. Teacher One expressed that "the way you say things and how you say things are very important" and therefore, language and tone can determine whether or not a school leader builds or maintains relationships with students. The findings also indicated that language of guilt, blame, and shame framed students in negative ways such as "criminals" or "bad kids". This categorization may represent the lack of awareness of inequitable systems and structures that have failed many students. Given the context of positive discipline, language and especially tone are important "if you're trying to validate a student's behaviour and work with them to get them into their prefrontal cortex, you can't come across as being angry and mad" (School Leader Two). Behaviour Consultant One also expressed that: "I think language is super important. The language you choose can trigger things for people . . ." The findings indicated that students make logical decisions in the prefrontal cortex of their brain. This finding was supported by Funahashi (2017) where it was stated that "the most important function of the prefrontal cortex is the executive function. Among a variety of executive functions in which the prefrontal cortex participates, decision-making is one of the most important" (para. 1). Accordingly, the appropriate language and tone were necessary for students to make sound judgments and decisions.

However, if students are approached with scary language and an angry tone, it is highly likely that they will shift to the part of their brain where they will react negatively. In this regard, Jaehnig (2020) highlighted that:

> The brain stem has the important structural job of connecting the brain to the spinal cord which in turn branches into the nerves that communicate between the brain and rest of your body. However, it is also responsible for many of your most basic bodily functions.

> Just above the brainstem inside of the cerebrum are more intricate structures including the amygdala. (paras. 5 - 6)

The amygdala is the part of the brain that controls emotions. Therefore, if students are triggered by inappropriate language and/or tone, the amygdala begins to process. For example, "the amygdala processes fear, triggers anger, and motivates us to act. It alerts us to danger and activates the fight or flight response" (Karmin, 2016, para. 2). Accordingly, this is the process that School Leader Two referred to that could happen if tone and language were to be a negative trigger for students. Consequently, several phrases were identified in the findings as ways to engage students with the hope of stimulating the prefrontal cortex of the brain. Some of these skills were obtained over time from role models.

**The importance of role models when implementing positive discipline.** The results showed that role models served as an extrinsic push factor for school leaders to utilize positive discipline. The role models or mentors were not limited to the educational realm but included other individuals from society. Based on this finding, it can be inferred that positive discipline, if implemented well and maintained, can be sustainable. The sustainability of positive discipline is the capacity for it to serve present and future generations. Though mentorship played a critical role in some school leaders' beliefs about discipline, it was not always highlighted and promoted. For this reason, School Leader Three mentioned: "I don't think we do enough of that in terms of the role that mentoring can play . . ." It was School Leader Three's view that "the way that our current [education] system is set up, I don't think it lends itself to that [mentorship] which is unfortunate" (School Leader Three). In this regard, School Leader Three was explaining that school leaders who were about to commence the utilization of positive discipline should have opportunities to visit other school leaders who have gone through the initial stages. Therefore,

role models and mentors served as motivating factors for school leaders to shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline and could be potentially used to influence other school leaders to transition.

The results showed that positive discipline centres on building and maintaining relationships. Positive discipline also emphasizes a positive school environment through conversations and mutual respect. The findings further indicated that positive discipline is a belief system. One of its core beliefs is there is good in everybody. Since positive discipline is a belief system, it can be incorporated in any positive disciplinary approach. For this reason, the results showed that PAX, restitution, Seven Teachings, and discipline with dignity approaches were utilized on the premise that there is good in everybody, everybody makes mistakes, and mistakes are learning opportunities. Accordingly, most of these models are strength-based and encourage the utilization of intrinsic motivation to improve students' behaviour. Additionally, the appropriate use of language and tone was critical to reap the benefits associated with positive discipline and mentorship was vital for some school leaders to experience the impact of positive discipline.

**Impact of Positive Discipline**

The results showed that when positive discipline is utilized effectively, participants noted improved student behaviour and academic achievement. It also created and promoted inclusion based on improved behaviour emanating from the core beliefs of positive discipline. The findings also showed that some school leaders were attracted to positive discipline based on these positive impacts. Furthermore, it can be deduced from the findings that the utilization of positive discipline actualizes the role of school and discipline in the lives of students based on school leaders' perceptions. If school leaders' beliefs are aligned with positive discipline, then it

appears that the schools may be able to better prepare students for adulthood. Improved behaviour was critical for this type of actualization; school and discipline should prepare students for adulthood. Therefore, the use of positive disciplinary approaches enabled school leaders to influence students' behaviour in a positive manner which appears to be essential to actualize the roles of the school.

**Impacts of positive discipline on students' behaviour.** The findings showed that the use of positive discipline improved students' behaviour. In this regard, negative behaviours were rarely repeated (Behaviour Consultant One) or there was "potentially less chance of reoffending" (Peace Officer One). This notion was supported by Schiff (2018) where restorative justice, a positive disciplinary approach, was credited for reducing "recidivism rates" and increasing "positive relationships" (p. 126). For this reason, Teacher One mentioned that the impact of positive discipline on students with certain behavioural challenges was good. The process needed for this improvement may take time but ultimately, it changes behaviour for the better (Teacher One). Consequently, Teacher One expressed: "I think that the positive behavioural interventions are really beneficial . . . I see them working". Accordingly, it can be inferred from the findings that the positive interventions reduced behavioural infractions and suspensions. These results were also purported by Schiff (2018) with the use of restorative justice practices (p. 126).

The results also showed that if the approaches utilized are successful, the good behaviour emanating from the utilization of positive discipline created a safe school environment. Positive discipline recognizes that students have unique needs that they are trying to meet. Sometimes, in an attempt to meet those needs, behaviours may become unsafe. In this regard, the use of positive discipline ensures that those students can meet their needs in a better and safe way. For example, if students are abusive, then there needs to be an understanding of why students are of

this nature (Peace Officer One). As a result, Peace Officer One stated: "why are these kids hitting, what's happening at home, are they being abused at home, is it something that they see, are there domestic situations . . . ?" Positive discipline is about providing the necessary supports to strengthen students with behavioural issues so that they know there is a better way and that they are not terrible students. For example:

> So, you assaulted Johnny and we know that you see this, but we need to teach you that this is not okay. So, let's talk about it, let's get them into therapy, let's get them counseling, [and] let's come together as a community. (Peace Officer One)

Therefore, with positive approaches as opposed to damaging punitive interventions, behavioural concerns are addressed. Students are not merely suspended for days or weeks with the expectation that the problem will not reoccur based on the punishment received. However, students receiving therapy and counselling may not truly address the issues if the wider social forces that shape some of the behaviours are not acknowledged and addressed.

Truly addressing the behavioural issues creates a safe school environment. In this manner, school leaders and teachers are building relationships and over time, a school community. Regarding building relationships, Behaviour Consultant One stated: "if I helped you [a student] through something and you come out of it feeling proud and you're stronger or better prepared to handle this in the future, I'm on your side. I haven't discomforted you. I haven't harmed you". In this way, relationships and trust are being built and/or maintained. Gonzalez (2012) also pointed out that "restorative justice programs in school settings prioritize building school community capacity over punitive responses to behaviors to create safer environments" (p. 229). Therefore, positive discipline can improve students' behaviour and create safe places. It was also put forward that "schools in Manitoba are committed to providing safe and caring

places for learning" (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017a, p. 3). Based on the findings, if the province is committed to this task, then it is the belief that fully supporting the use of positive discipline in schools is vital to achieving true safe and caring learning spaces.

Furthermore, the results indicated that improved student behaviour takes time and requires the ongoing use of positive discipline. Based on school leaders' experiences, it took time to see the noticeable change in students' behaviour. This experience was also shared by Teacher One in reference to students with behavioural challenges. Therefore, it can be inferred from the findings that the use of positive discipline needs to be consistent. For this reason, positive discipline should become a way of life for schools. Consequently, proactive as opposed to the reactive use of positive discipline was favoured. For Teacher One, "there's some teaching that has to come beforehand [for students] to understand it [positive discipline] . . ."

However, the findings showed that positive discipline was used proactively and reactively. Kline (2016) also pointed out that "restorative practices have a preventive, as well as a reactive component" (p. 99). It can be deduced from the findings that the reactive use of positive discipline was as a result of the belief that mistakes are learning opportunities and the inconsistent or non-philosophical use of the approach. The findings further showed that the inconsistent use of positive discipline may be as a result of a lack of resources. Accordingly, "they [schools] don't have the resources. So [they] send the kids home, let them play video games, reoffend, and deal with it again" (Peace Officer One). Therefore, with the lack of required resources, then punitive measures are meted out to students. Hence, Manitoba Education and Training has a critical role in ensuring that schools have the necessary resources to create a safe and caring learning environment. Therefore, the philosophical use of positive discipline is also dependent on financial resources that are critical to increased behavioural

improvement. Nonetheless, based on the successes experienced over time with the use of positive discipline, school leaders were motivated and pulled to use or continue to use the approach. Additionally, with good behaviour, safe spaces are created and students are better able to maximize their academic potential based on the cumulative benefits of positive discipline over time.

**Impacts of positive discipline on academic performance.** The findings showed that if positive discipline was utilized effectively and negative behaviours were eliminated or reduced, then academic performance improved. Accordingly, improved behaviour was inextricably linked to student achievement. For this reason, Teacher One expressed that "with those positive measures, when behaviours are going down, academic performance would be going up. That's what I see [happening]". It was logical to deduce that if positive discipline is reducing behavioural issues then more focus can be placed on academics by students and teachers. In this manner, the role of the school is also being fulfilled by equipping students with the requisite knowledge to be productive citizens. This interpretation can be supported by Vaandering's (2014) statement that "schools across the globe are turning to restorative justice (rj) practices in hopes of developing safe and caring school cultures that will effectively support the academic purpose of schooling" (p. 64). Therefore, the impact of positive discipline on students' ability to achieve academic outcomes was a motivating pull factor for school leaders to utilize the approach. With behavioural improvements, students' academic needs were fulfilled in an inclusive school environment.

**Impacts of positive discipline on inclusion.** The findings indicated that positive discipline fosters and promotes inclusion based on school leaders' experience. Also, Teacher One shared that:

> It [positive discipline] fosters inclusion because it makes kids feel safe to come to school . . . So, I think when people feel that they are coming to a place and [know] how people are going to act [positively], they'll feel safe. That's pretty much what inclusion is; feeling safe and secure at school.

Inclusion is important for students to feel safe and a sense of belonging. Brendtro et. al. (2014), stated that "when Belonging is experienced . . ., life is fulfilling and fun. One can trust others, be trusted in return, and feel pride and acceptance" (p. 10). With such a feeling of acceptance, students were better able to maximize their academic capabilities. Accordingly, the impact of positive discipline on inclusion was a great fit for school leaders because it was aligned to one of their beliefs; there is good in everybody.

Based on the findings, positive discipline is for everyone. This notion was also shared by Behaviour Consultant One. However, Behaviour Consultant One also said that:

> . . . Using a process [positive discipline] that is all about trying to understand what a person's motivation was and what it was that they needed, I guess can help to bring to light experiences that may not be understood by the majority. So, I think that is probably more important for a minority group.

Though positive discipline is for everyone, it may give minority groups that have been marginalized based on structural racism or colonialism equitable opportunities to attain self-actualization. The flexible nature of positive discipline highlights its effectiveness in benefiting diverse student groups including marginalized ones. In this regard, Teacher One highlighted that positive discipline was able to cater to the needs of minority or marginalized groups in a school. For this reason, Teacher One said: "I think about students who may be on the LGBTQ [spectrum], feeling safe and secure coming to school is very important for them and . . .

especially when they are looking for trusted adults . . .” and positive discipline was able to provide them with this safe and secure space. Furthermore, with positive discipline, relationships were built and/or maintained based on trust and mutual respect.

Inclusion was also about giving voice to each student and positive discipline created a safe space for students to communicate their feelings, concerns, and/or decisions individually, collectively, or through a leadership role. According to Morris (2016) as cited in Mansfield et. al. (2018), “using restorative approaches to discipline encourages the development of students’ communication and leadership skills” (p. 306). Positive discipline is an adaptable belief system that can fit in a number of approaches that can give voice to diverse groups. This claim can be supported by the different types of positive disciplinary approaches highlighted in this study. Accordingly, restitution, restorative justice, Seven Teachings, discipline with dignity, and PAX are all belief systems hinged on inclusion. It was based on this rationale that positive discipline transcends class, culture, ethnic groups, race, sexual orientation, and religion. Hence, the impact of positive discipline on inclusion was a motivating pull factor for school leaders to utilize positive discipline.

According to the findings, positive discipline influenced students’ behaviour and academic performance positively and enhanced inclusion. Based on the belief that there is good in everybody, positive discipline was utilized to fix the problem by providing the necessary interventions or supports. This was based on another principle that mistakes are opportunities to learn. Furthermore, positive discipline fosters trust and relationship building. With these beliefs and practices, students’ behaviour improved over time. When negative behaviours were eliminated or reduced, it contributed to a safe school environment. Improved behaviour and a safe school environment created learning conditions where students could maximize their

academic potential. Also, positive discipline fostered and promoted inclusion. Inclusion played a role in ensuring that students felt safe and were ready to learn. Based on the overall benefits of positive discipline, school leaders were attracted to the approach and commenced their journey from punitive to positive discipline.

## Journeying from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline

The findings indicated that school leaders were on a journey from punitive to positive school-based discipline. For the school leaders, this journey was as a result of either push factors associated with punitive discipline and/or pull factors associated with positive discipline. The findings showed that school leaders were at different places on the continuum from punitive to positive. Though they had different starting times and positions, the school leaders along with staff and students were all benefiting from the transition. The findings also showed that the transition meant venturing into the unknown and was riddled with challenges that needed strategic responses. Furthermore, time was a critical factor in school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline.

**The importance of time when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** The results showed that time was essential to school leaders' shift from punitive to positive discipline or school leaders' utilization of positive discipline. Time was needed for school leaders to understand positive disciplinary approaches and to utilize them effectively. For one school leader, it took at least five years to shift to proactive use of a positive approach (School Leader Two). This experience was consistent with Teacher One's response in describing how long it took for the administrator to transition from punitive to positive school-based discipline. Teacher One stated that:

> When I came to [this school], I came the same year that [the school leader] became principal. So, I am not sure what kind of discipline would have been here before that [time]. But I am sure from what we learn and what you read in research, it takes like five to seven years to change the climate of the school and to make change in the school . . . We implemented some programs . . . and it took several years to see the benefits of [those] programs . . . From the experience that I have had, with any change, it takes a while to implement the change and have it work effectively.

Accordingly, it took a lot of time to reap the benefits of positive discipline and school leaders must have patience.

Based on the findings, another important factor that required time was the changing of mindset. The mindset was equally important for the school leaders who were about to embark on the shift as well as for their staff. However, the findings indicated that if belief systems were not aligned with the notion of positive discipline, then the transition can be more challenging. When a person's belief system did not "match up", it took time for reflection and education for staff to understand the nature and context in which positive discipline functions. This was evident from School Leader Three's experience where it took time to align personal beliefs with those of positive discipline. In the literature review, I discussed that the traditional beliefs held by school leaders relating to disciplinary control must be changed to make way for positive responses (p. 47) and this analysis was cemented by the findings. For this reason, there must be a transition from "authoritarian and punitive to democratic and responsive" (Payne & Welch, 2015, p. 541). Therefore, there must be a change in mindset regarding power and control, and staff support was critical to this change.

**The process of gaining staff support when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** The results showed that it took time for some school leaders to obtain support from staff members. Support can be particularly time-consuming because not everyone's belief system is aligned to those of positive discipline. In this regard, Teacher One recalled ". . . there have been staff that have been less on board with it [positive discipline] or say [school leader] needs to be more strict or why is this kid not getting a different kind of consequence . . ." For this reason, it can be inferred that gaining staff support was heavily reliant on the type of mindset or belief system that they had at the time when the school leader was ready to transition. Another critical factor relating to support was the experience of staff members relating to positive discipline (School Leader Three). From the findings, I would say that staff members with more exposure to positive discipline, based on experiences, were more willing to support school leaders' transition. This explanation coincided with School Leader Three's view on whether a teacher was in their first year as opposed to having 10 years of experience with positive discipline. It was easier for school leaders to transition when teachers' mindsets were aligned to positive disciplinary beliefs. However, having one year of teaching experience did not mean that a teacher was punitive, and having 10 years of teaching experience did not guarantee that a teacher was positive. Nonetheless, the findings showed that with training, school leaders were able to gain better support from staff.

**The importance of training when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** The results indicated that training (professional preparation) was critical to school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline or school leaders' utilization of positive discipline. Training was important for understanding positive discipline, realigning beliefs, sometimes garnering support, and for successful implementation. In this regard, McCluskey et al.

(2008), stated that "the key features associated with successful implementation, in . . . primary and secondary schools, included readiness for change, and also balance of clarity and flexibility about identification of aims. This was . . . often associated with good quality training and leadership" (p. 412). Accordingly, training was an important aspect of preparing school leaders and staff for this change from punitive to positive discipline. Training, being such a critical component for the success of positive discipline, took a lot of time. For School Leader One, training was an ongoing process and School Leader Two highlighted that training took several years. It is logical that years of training were necessary, especially, ongoing training to eliminate "agenda[s] of compliance and control" (Vaandering, 2014, p. 65) to create a positive school culture. In this regard, Gonsoulin et al., (2012) acknowledged the effectiveness of professional learning communities for disciplinary changes based on the ongoing learning opportunities (p. 311). For this reason, effective training or professional learning opportunities were necessary for the implementation of positive discipline.

**The significance of implementation when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** The findings demonstrated that the implementation of positive discipline relied heavily on training and staff support. The rationale supporting this claim was that school leaders had to be knowledgeable about positive discipline to oftentimes obtain the support of staff. Staff members were not always knowledgeable about the benefits of positive discipline and/or their beliefs were not always aligned to the approach. Accordingly, this lack of knowledge and/or unmatched beliefs meant that school leaders' decision to utilize or shift to positive discipline was not tantamount to implementation and/or use. For this reason, training in areas such as control theory and staff support were significant components for the implementation of positive discipline. However, the results also showed that for some school leaders, the implementation

process was smooth because of previous experience with the process. It can be deduced from this finding that if school leaders are adequately prepared, they are better equipped to deal with issues such as unmatched belief systems and training that may retard the implementation process. Additionally, that preparation may reduce the time between a school leader's decision to shift to positive discipline and the actual implementation process. After implementation, school leaders had to maintain the use of positive discipline to realize the benefits associated the approach.

**The significance of maintaining positive discipline when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** The findings demonstrated that there were several things done to maintain positive discipline as school leaders continued on the journey. It can be deduced from the findings that the measures utilized to maintain positive discipline were still developing because it was an ongoing journey and there were different challenges at different stages. Staff had a significant role in ensuring that positive discipline was maintained. Accordingly, this premise further validated the need for their support and belief system to be aligned with positive discipline. In this regard, Teacher One shared:

> In our school, *we* do lots of different programs to help kids regulate emotions. So, preventative measures . . . *We* have done restitution; if someone does something, they make it right . . . *We* do a lot of relationship-building with the kids . . .

In analyzing Teacher One's response, there were three "*we"* statements. The "*we*" referred to staff and the statements were indicative of the significant role that they had in maintaining positive discipline. For this reason, ongoing staff development as expressed by School Leader One was necessary to ensure staff members were able to effectively maintain positive discipline.

From analyzing the findings, the process of maintaining positive discipline requires a school leader with positive beliefs and a vision for positive discipline, staff buying into that

vision and aligning their beliefs, and finally, staff being positive with students. It was further analyzed that if this process was not effective, then positive discipline may not be maintained. Therefore, similar to ongoing staff development, there needed to be ongoing work with students so that they could be at a place where intrinsic motivation will result in self-regulation and improved behaviour. The findings indicated the utilization of zones of regulation helped students to achieve self-regulation. Kuyper (2020) purported that zones of regulation "provides strategies to teach students to become more aware and independent in controlling their emotions and impulses, manage their sensory needs, and improve their ability to problem solve conflicts" (para. 2). These strategies give students the power to find ways to respond to challenges in an appropriate manner. According to Teacher One, students were able to recognize their zones and when they needed a break. Students would break and "go for a drink of water, take a walk, listen to music . . . Some kids like to do laps around the school, some kids like to do art and so, it's just a personal preference" (Teacher One). The findings also showed that intrinsic as opposed to extrinsic motivation was necessary to maintain positive discipline because extrinsic motivation only changed behaviour for a short time (School Leader One). This ongoing work with students was evident in building and/or maintaining relationships with students. It was as a result of the importance of relationships in maintaining positive discipline that School Leader Three expressed that if teachers can have a relationship with students, then they can be taught anything.

Other components helped to maintain positive discipline; communication and decision-making. Clear and effective communication was necessary to maintain the use of positive discipline. Through communication, staff were able to understand school leaders' beliefs and vision for the utilization of positive discipline. Furthermore, communication was critical for students to understand the model and share their expectations. Most importantly, there was the

need for parents or the community to be aware of the utilization of positive discipline at school. Accordingly, communication was a logical step in ensuring that the work at school was not being retarded with other practices at home. Therefore, to make parents aware, some school leaders engaged in proactive activities such as an "open-house" at the start of the year at school or a yearly traditional feast in the community where relationships can be built and/or maintained, and information relating to disciplinary approaches can be shared.

Decision-making was also important in ensuring that positive discipline was maintained. For this reason, both staff and students were engaged in the decision-making related to positive discipline. Staff were able to share their views and utilized a positive disciplinary approach that they were comfortable with and this interpretation coincided with the different positive approaches utilized by school leaders. Students got the opportunity to share what they would like their school to look and feel like. As a result, it was easier to maintain positive discipline when they were creating guidelines and sharing in the philosophy. In this context, the distributed leadership approach would provide the flexibility needed for school leaders to include staff and students in the decision-making. The approach shares the "burdensome workload" of the school leader and in so doing, would help to maintain positive discipline (Thompson, 2016) and in this sense, the "lonely instructional leader" (Wright, 2008, p. 8) is rejected. Therefore, the findings showed that a shared or collaborative leadership style was a crucial factor in maintaining positive discipline. Furthermore, evaluating the effectiveness of positive discipline was critical in maintaining it.

**The importance of evaluating positive discipline when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** The results showed that positive disciplinary approaches were evaluated by school leaders in several ways. School Leader One utilized spreadsheets as one of the options to

evaluate the effectiveness of positive discipline. This experience was also shared by Teacher One who stated that "in the beginning, [the school leader] kept track of the infractions on the playground using a card system". The spreadsheet was important to ascertain if behaviours were repeated. In this context, staff members were important to the evaluation of positive discipline because they provided updates to the school leader for tracking and assessing positive approaches utilized. It can be inferred from the findings that if negative behaviours were decreasing then positive approaches were working. If negative behaviours were increasing, it would probably be an indication that positive discipline was not being maintained and/or implementation was not effective. Since good behaviour was inextricably tied to academic performance, it was logical that meeting academic outcomes was a way to evaluate positive discipline (School Leader One). Furthermore, the findings showed that the mental health and well-being of students was an important aspect of evaluating positive discipline (School Leader One). It can be deduced from the findings that when positive discipline was creating a safe and inclusive place for students, and the requisite supports were available, then their mental health and well-being was better cared for.

Additionally, there was the *Tell Them From Me Survey*, a provincial survey that provided data on several categories including discipline. For this survey, the findings indicated that students are given the opportunities to share direct information on all the categories including discipline, and thereafter, the school leaders receive feedback. For Behaviour Consultant One, it was really important to get direct feedback from the students. Behaviour Consultant One also shared an experience about a school where students were surveyed about restitution. At that school, the staff felt they did a great job in teaching the students restitution. However, it turned out that students did not understand restitution or see it happening in the school. Accordingly, for

this particular question: “what happens in a school when you make a mistake?” The staff felt that “oh the kids are going to say that we fix it”. However, several students said “you get punished” (Behaviour Consultant One). Therefore, beliefs and practices were not aligned. In this context, students were seen as an important part of the evaluation of positive discipline.

Additionally, the findings demonstrated that if a school leader was journeying from punitive to positive discipline, then the number of suspensions and classroom behavioural issues were effective ways to evaluate positive disciplinary approaches. Again, if these numbers were decreasing, it was an indication that positive approaches were working. For this reason, Schiff (2018) said that “there is now considerable evidence that RJP [Restorative Justice Practice] can help reduce suspension and expulsion, decrease disciplinary referrals, improve academic achievement, and other positive results” (p. 126). Hence, there is “considerable evidence” to utilize these indicators as effective tools to assess positive discipline. Additionally, there were the “intangibles” that were used to assess positive discipline; for example, the feeling of the building. In this regard, Teacher One expressed that: “you could just tell from the school climate that things had changed” (Teacher One) and accordingly, this was an indicator for school leaders as expressed by School Leader Three. The assessment of positive discipline was necessary to maintain positive discipline as well as to identify and respond to challenges.

**The importance of identifying challenges and responses when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** The findings showed that there were a number of challenges and responses to those challenges as school leaders journeyed from punitive to positive discipline. However, the findings also showed that the challenges at school were two-folded; relating to students and staff. Logically, the challenges included both students and staff because of their respective connections to positive discipline. Positive discipline was being utilized to help

students achieve self-actualization in a safe and inclusive school environment, and staff had important roles in ensuring these goals were achieved. Specifically relating to students, self-regulation was a major challenge. The findings showed that self-regulation was a major issue for younger students because of growth, hormones, and the impacts of engagement with social media. It can be inferred that students were experiencing changes and those were combined with curiosity and therefore, contributing to the challenge of self-regulation. In responding to this challenge, there were interventions such as teacher training, academic and behavioural plans, communicating with parents and the continuous use of positive interventions to support students. The interventions were utilized to strengthen students and maintain positive discipline. Furthermore, the continuous use of positive disciplinary approaches enabled students to develop self-regulation over time as positive discipline became a way of life.

The results also showed that there were social factors that negatively affected students' mental health and well-being. School Leader Three identified some of these social challenges as poverty, trauma, and abuse. It can be inferred from the results that these social factors affected students' behaviour and academic performance negatively. In responding to the challenge associated with the social factors, it was encouraged to support students and show them love (School Leader Three) and in so doing, the breakfast program was one way to support students (School Leader One and Teacher One). Regarding trauma, Behaviour Consultant One stated:

> When you look at the number of children that are coming from situations of trauma, I think approaching discipline in a positive way increases the safety just for them in the environment. They feel like school is a safe place to be, and that people care about me, and I'm not going to be hurt here.

The responses to these social issues were consistent with William Glasser's control theory where love and belonging were identified as basic needs. This notion was also supported by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory (Maslow, 1970). Love and a sense of belonging were necessary for students to self-actualize; to be good, productive citizens (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018, p. 121). Accordingly, using disciplinary approaches, such as the Seven Teachings, helped school leaders to identify with students which made them feel included and a sense of belonging.

There were several challenges and responses related to staff members and positive discipline. The diversity of staff members was a significant challenge for school leaders to navigate. In this regard, the addition of new staff members who had no experience with positive discipline was challenging for school leaders. The challenge was further complicated when a new staff member's mindset or belief system was not aligned with positive discipline. For this reason, Behaviour Consultant One said ". . . a lot of times I go in and train staff but in two years there's a bunch of new people on staff and so, how do they learn about what it's [positive discipline] about?" Based on the findings, the response lies in ongoing training and awareness about positive discipline. For this reason, Teacher One said:

> I think that once you have more understanding of the benefits and the disservice the punitive nature of punishment has on kids then it's a mindset that has to shift. Once you understand that, then you can see it more clearly, or you see the benefits of it over time, then your mindset starts to shift.

Therefore, the onus was on school leaders to ensure that staff members were continuously exposed to the benefits of positive discipline.

The training was necessary for teachers to understand positive discipline in regard to consequences. In this regard, School Leader Two expressed:

> Well, I think there's still a sense from some people that there should be more consequences even though we are trying to shift to the Restitution Model. I think the sense of not having enough consequences can be a challenge among staff members.

This experience was also corroborated by Teacher One, who said "another factor is that staff members could have that same belief . . . that punitive discipline may be more effective than positive interventions". Again, training and awareness were important factors to ensure that teachers understood that consequences can be utilized for inappropriate behaviour. However, the consequences did not have to be punitive. Since mistakes were seen as learning opportunities, the consequences should enable students to benefit in that manner. Accordingly, some school leaders provided resources for teachers, encouraged mentorship, and did regular classroom visits to get an understanding of what was happening and to provide supports if needed.

Additionally, the results indicated that the lack of parental support may be a challenge that retards the use of positive discipline. It was logical to deduce that if parents do not understand the benefits of positive discipline then support will be lacking. It could even become a case where parents believe that school is not doing anything to solve behavioural issues. In this regard, Teacher One stated:

> I think one factor would be parental involvement and maybe parents are seeing the way that they were disciplined as a more effective way of disciplining kids. So, they don't take the way that we would do it at school seriously, or they don't like it, or they may want to give punitive [discipline] at home for the thing we've dealt with at school already.

Hence, parental involvement was important to the effective use of positive discipline. The findings also showed that some parents have supported behaviours deemed inappropriate by the

school (School Leader Three) which was in total opposition to the objectives the school was trying to achieve. In responding to this challenge, effective communication and spreading awareness were highlighted as ways to obtain parental involvement or support.

The results also showed that for schools with a high Indigenous population, many parents and grandparents were still suffering from trauma. This trauma was a result of the residential schools that were characterized by corporal punishment. Sharpe (2011) stated that:

> Aboriginal children in residential schools were subjected to extreme degrees of cruelty . . . Vicious, and often arbitrary punishments were part of the fabric of daily life. Children were routinely given public beatings for misbehaving or speaking their language. (pp. 214- 215)

Consequently, it was challenging for some Indigenous parents or guardians to be in a school building based on their horrific experiences (School Leader Three). It can be inferred from this situation that those horrific experiences have also negatively affected the relationship between the school and the community. As a result, the school leader went into the community to engage parents and guardians by participating in a number of Indigenous activities. This response helped to build trust, relationships, and fostered inclusion and support that were necessary for the effectiveness of positive discipline. Though these situations were difficult to navigate, some school leaders had some real bumps and bruises on the journey.

***Bumps and bruises when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.*** There were some very difficult challenges identified in one of the school leader's journey from punitive to positive discipline. In this context, imagine climbing a mountain, for the very first time. You want to reach the top because you believe it would be a fulfilling journey based on others' experiences. Suddenly and unexpectedly, you start to slide and go downhill. What do you think

will happen? My logical response would be that you will become terribly bruised while bumping your way down if there is no support to help or cushion you. Similarly, some school leaders experienced some bumpy but hurtful bruises that could have easily pulled them back or made them reverse on the journey. In this regard, School Leader Three expressed that the journey can be very lonely when a school leader is making a change. Even though Wright (2008) discouraged "the lonely instructional leader" (p. 8), some school leaders did not always get the support needed to commence the change or journey.

Accordingly, the results showed that some school leaders were bruised emotionally. For example, the findings indicated that the apparent nature for some people to be mean and say hurtful things (School Leader Three) could be potentially damaging to them personally. It can be further interpreted that the personal damage of those unkind actions experienced by school leaders were extrinsic and discouraging factors that could impede the journey from punitive to positive discipline. Nonetheless, school leaders found the resolve to continue on the journey. Based on the findings, confidence, knowledge about the positive discipline, and self-care were responses to these bumps and bruises. It can be interpreted from school leaders' responses that they had to believe in the values that they were sharing with others. Accordingly, they had to be intrinsically motivated and pull from their inner strength while leaving portals opened for people who have bruised them, because everybody makes mistakes, and mistakes are opportunities to learn. Accordingly, school leaders had to use the same positive philosophical approach with those staff that they were using with students. Therefore, after surviving "some hell", school leaders were appropriately prepared to shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline.

**The importance of a paradigm shift when journeying from punitive to positive discipline.** The results showed that a paradigm shift from punitive to positive discipline took

place years ago at the societal level. The shift was a result of several changes in society. These changes included factors relating to migration, LGBTQ community, religions, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the impact of laws and legal awareness, the elimination of "white privilege", and children being agents of change (School Leader Three). From these results, the paradigm shift was predominantly based on inclusion, equity, and the law. Therefore, there were advances made in the wider society to eliminate punitive discipline based on those factors. However, it can be further inferred from the findings that advances made relating to discipline based on its trajectory were to eliminate physical abuse and not punitive discipline. This elimination was evident in the case of residential schools that ended in 1996 (Miller, 2017; Truth and Reconciliation, n.d.) and corporal punishment that ended in 2004 in Canada.

According to these contexts, punitive discipline became the "new corporal punishment" based on the negative effects associated with the approach. In this regard, the paradigm shift can be juxtaposed to a wolf in a sheep's clothing. This analysis was supported by statistics showing an increase in suspensions in the Brandon School Division for the 2018 to 2019 academic year. Accordingly, "in total, there were 430 suspensions across all BSD schools during the 2018-19 school year, up from 333 in 2017-18 and 239 in 2016-17" (Slark, 2019). Also, in the Winnipeg School Division (WSD), out-of-school suspensions were being scrutinized and a motion was passed to conduct a study to investigate the impact of the suspensions on students (Winnipeg Free Press, 2019). Furthermore, ". . . the need for the WSD to be aware of the effects of suspensions on marginalized and Indigenous students" (Winnipeg Free Press Editorial Board, 2019) was emphasized by a trustee. In light of the suspensions or punitive measures, Teacher One expressed that "in some schools, maybe there's a shift but I don't think in all schools. I think

that some schools might be stuck in a more traditional-punitive form of disciplining" and this was evident with the increased suspensions.

Nonetheless, it can be deduced that schools can be positioned for a paradigm shift. In this regard, Teacher One stated: "I think it all depends on the leader, but it is possible to shift the paradigm" and reference was made to the superintendent being an advocate for positive discipline (Teacher One). Hence, if divisional and school leadership value positive discipline as an approach, it is easier to stimulate the paradigm shift in schools. However, there must be a paradigm shift in mindset. There must be an understanding that punitive discipline has never fixed the problem. It is logical that society is better poised where people can begin to understand that traditional and ineffective context that punitive discipline does not improve or fix anything and begin to truly shift from punitive to positive discipline. A parallel to that claim was when Behaviour Consultant One stated that:

> So I think there has been a shift in that I used to have to work harder to convince people that there was another way. Now when I do training that's not the issue, the bigger issue now is "I believe in that [restitution] but I don't know how to do it", that's the big issue. So, it's not a massive paradigm shift, it's more of a fine-tuning problem-solving kind of approach.

Therefore, the true shift in paradigm has started and it is important for such a shift to continue to stimulate school leaders to utilize positive discipline. It is particularly critical for this paradigm shift to fuel school leaders to continue on the journey and to assist in eliminating challenges or bumps and bruises.

Relating to question one, the research demonstrated that school leaders journeyed from punitive to positive discipline based on several factors which served as either a push or a pull.

According to school leaders' perception of the role of the school and discipline, they were able to acknowledge that punitive discipline did not fulfil those roles. The school was seen as the place to prepare students for adulthood so that they could become productive citizens. Discipline was to teach students skills that were needed for them to function as productive citizens. However, punitive discipline did not effectively prepare students for adulthood or teach them skills needed on daily basis. Rather, the use of punitive discipline negatively affected relationships that were necessary to solve the problem. Furthermore, punitive discipline did not improve students' behaviour and negatively affected academics and the community. These were motivating push factors for school leaders to utilize another disciplinary approach.

For this reason, positive discipline became an alternative to punitive discipline. Positive discipline is a belief system with core values such as relationships, mistakes are learning opportunities, and there is good in everybody. Since positive discipline is a belief system, there were several positive approaches identified; PAX, restitution, Seven Teachings, and discipline with dignity. These approaches were utilized by school leaders because they share the fundamental core values of positive discipline. Language and tone were also important in ensuring the effectiveness of positive approaches. These two factors could determine whether the problem was fixed or escalated. Some school leaders reported that individual family experiences and the opportunity to observe mentors prepared them to understand and embrace the benefits of positive discipline. Positive discipline was beneficial to students' behaviour, academics, and inclusion. It was based on these contexts that school leaders were attracted to positive discipline.

Thereafter, school leaders decided to journey from punitive to positive discipline. Based on the findings, school leaders are not yet at their destination. The journey requires a lot of time for staff support, training, and implementation. Staff support and training were critical for

effective implementation. After the implementation, school leaders had to evaluate and maintain positive discipline. These were important processes to identify challenges and responses to ensure that students can continuously benefit from positive discipline. However, some of the challenges were described as bumps and bruises that could halt the journey. For school leaders on this journey, they felt that the shift in paradigm from punitive to positive discipline has started years ago. However, there needs to be a shift in mindset to ensure that positive discipline is effectively used and maintained. Similar to any road journey, some laws influenced the speed at which school leaders transitioned from punitive to positive discipline.

## Question 2: The Law and School-Based Discipline

The results showed that federal and provincial laws influenced how school-based discipline is exercised. Based on this context, the law and school-based discipline were inextricably linked. For example, the case law, the *Foundation* case, saw an end to corporal punishment in 2004. Though the law influenced school-based discipline, it did not necessarily influence school leaders' approaches to discipline. Accordingly, school leaders' journey from punitive to positive school-based discipline was heavily hinged on their belief system. However, school leaders' knowledge of laws was important as they journeyed from punitive to positive discipline. Furthermore, the findings indicated that some laws could potentially debilitate the shift from punitive to positive discipline and accordingly, legal awareness was critical.

### Legal Awareness

The results showed that legal awareness could be advantageous for school leaders. In this context, legal training was not necessary but definitely, legal support. However, based on the fact that the law and school-based discipline are inextricably linked, legal awareness was important in

this context. When asked to describe whether or not it is useful for educators to get some form of legal training, Behaviour Consultant One said:

> I think it is. I remember when I was doing my Master's and we did our Education and the Law Course, I remember a lot of the teachers saying "why is this course not a part of my undergrad?" My experience around that table of people was people going "oh my gosh, I've done lots of things that I shouldn't have done!"

Based on experience, several Master of Education students are pursuing studies either because they were recently promoted as a vice-principal or principal, or they have an interest in becoming a school leader in the future. Behaviour Consultant One further said:

> . . . I think a lot of times we're almost setting teachers up. They are not even aware of all the different laws that impact them and when people find out, I think it's kind of scary for them [and they] go "oh my gosh, I had no idea!" and it is funny that that's not a course until master's level.

Therefore, legal awareness was important to ensure that students were treated fairly. Furthermore, it can be deduced from the results that it was important for teachers and school leaders to have this knowledge.

Additionally, it can be interpreted from the findings, that the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS) offering law-related professional development workshops (School Leader One), supported the premise that legal awareness was important. Legal awareness is critical for school practitioners especially in areas that are related to their profession. Peace Officer One mentioned that as a law enforcement officer seeking information from a principal about a student, the following occurred: "I ran into a little bit of a hesitant [situation where I was told] 'I am not giving you that information'. [However], under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, we are to share

information" (Peace Officer One). Peace Officer One's response was supported by section 125(6) of the *YCJA* regarding "Schools and Others" that permits the disclosure of information to professionals or persons "engaged in the supervision of a young person" (YCJA, 2002, p. 122). Three criteria would necessitate that disclosure and one was "to ensure the safety of staff, students or other persons". Based on this section, Peace Officer One felt the school leader was not aware of the provision because the information requested was not provided.

Furthermore, the results indicated that it was the responsibility of school leaders and staff to ensure that they know about the laws that will affect them personally and/or professionally. Based on this context, references were made to physical and sexual assault, verbal abuse, and uttering threats (Peace Officer One). For Peace Officer One, these things should be "common sense" and it was further pointed out that:

> It doesn't matter if it's in a school or daycare, or babysitting, or if you work at a restaurant, the laws are the laws and once you reach adulthood, it's a little bit more. It's reversed onus; now it's your responsibility to know the laws.

Therefore, the importance of legal awareness was highlighted by Peace Officer One. However, the importance was further strengthened when Peace Officer One said:

> So, if you want to be a teacher, you better familiarize yourself with what you can and can't do . . . So just because you're a teacher doesn't mean you're given any special leeway in the *Criminal Code*; it still stands for you.

Accordingly, ignorance should not be a defence based on potential legal action, criminal or tortious, that can result from the duty of care that school leaders have based on provincial and common law.

**Duty of Care**

Both the findings and the law demonstrated that school leaders owed a duty of care to students. As a result, there was a legal relationship established by the law where school leaders are acting in loco parentis. The findings also showed that the standard of care is changing and is holding educators to higher standards. This was evident with the case of corporal punishment and the interpretation of section 43, the "spanking law" of the *Criminal Code*. This higher standard could be as a result of the research relating to the negative effects of the current punitive discipline and calls to put an end to the exclusionary measures. For this reason, Behaviour Consultant One expressed: "actually, I think we hold our professionals to a higher standard, and I think we should, than we hold parents". This expression supported the claim regarding the higher standard of duty of care being required from educators. Behaviour Consultant One further mentioned that "so whereas a parent might be able to even use – a mild form of corporal punishment might be seen as okay for a parent, I don't think it's ever [okay] in a school" and therefore, reiterating the different but higher standard of care for educators.

Nonetheless, positive discipline provided a better response to this higher standard of care. In response to the influence of positive discipline on the duty of care, Teacher One said: "I think that it would promote teachers to be more likely to give that duty of care because they have healthy connections with the kids, and they don't see them in a negative way, and they care about them". The analysis that positive discipline provided a better response to the higher standard of care was further cemented when Behaviour Consultant One said:

> . . . I think we have a duty to keep up on the latest research and the latest best practices and so that's why positive discipline is something that we should be using in schools.

> Because we are professionals and we are not just acting in the place of a parent, I think we have a higher standard and so I think that's where the positive discipline fits in.

Therefore, the use of positive discipline helps to eliminate negligence that may result in criminal and/or civil liability. Based on the present context relating to the duty of care which is essential to keep students safe, the case of residential schools and the use of corporal punishment were seen as horrible times in Canadian history.

**Corporal Punishment: The Foundation Case**

The end of corporal punishment in 2004 emanating from the *Foundation Case* meant that some school leaders, school boards, and divisions had to find another disciplinary approach. Section 43 of the *Criminal Code* was no longer a defence for physical or corporal punishment. The section had been interpreted to be for educative and corrective use and that such action should be allowed for children who were able to benefit from it. The case law made it clear that section 43 did not apply to harm or the prospect of harm (Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and the Law v. Canada (Attorney General), 2004). As a result of this ruling, the punitive measure, suspension, was *the* disciplinary approach. However, based on the findings, the negative effects of suspensions can be almost compared to the negative effects of residential schools and corporal punishment. The Tina Fontaine story was a tragic and unfortunate example of the effects associated with suspensions (MACY, 2019, pp. 58 & 60). The *Foundation Case* signalled a "new era" but it was logical from the findings that further changes were needed. The law seems to be one of the most powerful tools to effect changes in school-based discipline and federal laws played a role in this regard.

**Federal Laws**

Federal laws emanate from the Canadian Parliament and apply to every province. These laws often establish certain rights, freedoms, and/or responsibilities to provide a safe and inclusive country where people can thrive peacefully. Based on the findings, school leaders utilizing positive discipline could eliminate or reduce situations in which federal laws are violated. It can be inferred that the elimination or reduction of those potential violations with the use of positive discipline would further create a school environment for students to thrive. The findings also showed that several federal laws influenced how school-based discipline was practiced. The *Criminal Code* was one of those federal laws that impacted school-based discipline.

**Criminal Code.** The results showed that there were behavioural issues at school that violated the *Criminal Code.* As a result of these issues, the *Code* has influenced divisional and school disciplinary policies. Though the *Code* was not added in its entirety to disciplinary policies, sections were sometimes utilized or referred to in these policies. The findings indicated that the sections were usually related to drugs, weapons, assault, and theft. Students were sometimes charged with these offences. In this regard, Peace Officer One said: "I know the high school SRO did lay charges for mostly possession of weapons, or assault – stuff like that". Whenever there were these serious violations of the *Criminal Code*, the findings showed that some school leaders unintentionally acted as agents of the state. In these cases, school leaders may perform roles such as evidence gathering and documenting that should be done by the Peace Officer because of the lack of legal knowledge. It can be further inferred that school leaders in an attempt to keep their schools safe may unintentionally violate the legal rights of students.

The *Criminal Code* is applicable to school leaders and teachers who may physically discipline students. According to Peace Officer One, "it's [physical discipline] . . . an assault" and "so the police will do an investigation". Section 265 of the *Criminal Code* also states that a "person commits an assault when without the consent of another person; he applies force intentionally to that other person, directly or indirectly" (Criminal Code, 1985, p. 328). The findings from the study indicate that school leaders are aware of the ways in which the law influences school-based discipline and also, the relationship between the law and the society. Nonetheless, the findings demonstrated that the use of positive discipline can affect the extent to which the *Criminal Code* influences school-based discipline. In this regard, if students are learning from their mistakes and problems are being fixed, then there may not be issues at school that will violate the *Code* and require the police (School Leader One). Based on the findings, the consistent utilization of punitive discipline did not eradicate illegal behaviours. It was a logical analysis therefore, that the type and nature of *Criminal Code* violations have influenced some school leaders to utilize positive discipline. Positive discipline eliminates situations in which school leaders may act as agents of the state and enable them to observe *YCJA* principles.

**Youth Criminal Justice Act.** Based on *Criminal Code* violations by students, the findings indicated that *YCJA* principles were not always guaranteed. From the analysis, these principles were unintentionally ignored in situations where school leaders acted as agents of the state. These situations usually involved students who were at least 12 years old. The *YCJA* would apply to those students because it provides youth ages 12 to 17 with certain legal rights and outlines the extrajudicial and judicial procedure when they commit an offence. It can be further analyzed that there are potential implications for school leaders who may act as agents of the state. School Leader One had suggested the possibility of the case falling apart and it can be

inferred from section 146(2) that the case will be affected if the criteria relating to when statements are admissible were not met for example. Furthermore, this claim was also supported by section 24(2) of the *Charter* where it is stated that:

> Where, in proceedings under subsection (1), a court concludes that evidence was obtained in a manner that infringed or denied any rights or freedoms guaranteed by this Charter, the evidence shall be excluded if it is established that, having regard to all the circumstances, the admission of it in the proceedings would bring the administration of justice into disrepute. (Charter, 1982)

Furthermore, it was highlighted in *R. v. M. (M.R)* (1998) that agents of the state should be held to the same standards of the law as police officers (para. 56). Therefore, cooperating and working as an agent of the state may cause evidence to become inadmissible, school leaders to be held to police standards, and the potential likelihood of civil lawsuit may result.

Additionally, it was analyzed from the results that *YCJA* had a limited but recognizable connection to positive discipline. Consequently, the extrajudicial measures highlighted that some mistakes were learning opportunities. In this context, a caution, warning or referral to institutions for support by the *Act* (section 10(1)) supported these opportunities (YCJA, 2002, p. 10). This context added to the proactive ways utilized by peace officers, as mentioned by School Leader One, to educate students about the law; rights and responsibilities. For this reason, Peace Officer One said: “if anything the Criminal Code is more of a proactive point, like a book that you could teach from rather than a book that you can react from . . . For me, it’s a 100 percent education”. The violations of the *Criminal Code* create situations where students 12 to 17 are held accountable under the *YCJA*. Therefore, for Peace Officer One, educating students about the different violations and punishments, in ways that they can understand, gave them the power to

make educated decisions. Accordingly, positive disciplinary approaches aid in the prevention of behaviours that may require the juvenile justice system while simultaneously guaranteeing *Charter* rights.

**Charter of Rights and Freedoms.** The results showed that the *Charter* has influenced how school leaders conceptualized school-based discipline. It can be further inferred from the results that this conceptualization was also done at the divisional level. These conceptualizations were as results of legal and equality rights guaranteed by the *Charter* as outlined in sections seven (7) to 14 and section 15 respectively. The conceptualizations based on legal rights were stemming from disciplinary measures that may result in unusual or cruel punishment, arbitrary detentions, and unreasonable searches. Relating to the latter factor, when asked "given your knowledge, how might the Charter of Rights and Freedoms influence disciplinary approaches in school," Peace Officer One mentioned:

> I haven't dealt with that. I'm wondering more of a high school situation [with] the idea of locker searches, police can't go in. [Police] can't walk into a school and open up a locker. They have their rights [relating] to unreasonable search and seizure . . .

Legal rights protect students from unreasonable searches, unusual or cruel punishment, and unlawful detention.

The equality conceptualization analysis was supported by School Leader One, who highlighted the equality rights by expressing the importance of fairness and equity and based on these contexts, the *Charter* has influenced discipline. In this regard, Teacher One mentioned that "I think the *Charter* will have a positive influence on positive behavioural interventions" and when asked to explain the aspect of the *Charter* with that influence, Teacher One said: "the human rights aspect". Accordingly, positive discipline was compatible with the *Charter* based on

shared core values (Behaviour Consultant One). This premise further supported the finding that the *Charter* reinforced that School Leader Three's belief system relating to discipline "is going along the right path". Therefore, the *Charter* has influenced school-based discipline positively and directly by encouraging school leaders to utilize approaches that will not violate guaranteed rights and freedoms. The findings further showed that positive discipline, when compared to punitive discipline, was better able to guarantee these rights and freedoms that are also protected by provincial laws.

**Provincial Laws**

Provincial laws are passed by the provinces to regulate those affairs that are not covered under federal laws. These laws also support federal laws by guaranteeing certain rights, freedoms and/or responsibilities. Based on the findings, provincial laws in Manitoba influenced the manner in which school-based discipline was utilized. It can be further analyzed that these laws also affected school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. The provincial government has the responsibility for education and as a result, there are a number of laws, such as the *PSA,* that have impacted the utilization of disciplinary approaches, either punitive and/or positive.

**Public Schools Act.** The results showed that the *PSA* was one of the main legislations influencing school-based discipline. This was a logical analysis because the *PSA* is one of the main provincial laws that govern the operations of schools. The findings further indicated that the *Act* did not necessarily promote a shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. It can be inferred from the findings that the punitive use of suspension hindered the shift from punitive to positive discipline for school leaders. The *PSA* gives school boards and by extension school leaders the power to suspend students for "injurious" conduct. According to 48(4):

> Subject to the regulations and notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, a school board may suspend or expel from a school any pupil who, upon investigation by the school board, is found to be guilty of conduct injurious to the school environment. (PSA, 1987, p. 133)

The term "injurious conduct" is seemingly not defined and is left to school boards and school leaders' interpretation. Furthermore, though section 47.1(2) details what should be involved in the content of schools' codes of conduct, there were no obvious prescribed disciplinary measures for these behavioural conducts (PSA, 1987, pp. 121 – 122). It can be deduced from the nature of the conduct mentioned in the section that those could be possibly "injurious to the school environment" but there was no such apparent connection. For this reason, a suspension may be used as a discretionary disciplinary measure and this was evident with findings showing two types of suspensions; suspension with and without interventions.

Suspension without intervention was merely excluding the student from school for inappropriate behaviour without any supports. However, suspension with interventions enabled the student to get supports while excluded from school for negative behaviour. Nonetheless, the results also showed that supports were not always available and timely. Accordingly, these findings can be compared to those associated with Ontario's progressive disciplinary model. With the progressive model, "schools should utilize a range of interventions, supports, and consequences . . ." (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 3) for inappropriate behaviour, to encourage students to make better decisions. For this reason, "students who are suspended for more than five school days, or who are expelled from all schools in the school board, will be offered a board program to give them opportunities to keep learning (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 3). However, about two years following the legislated progressive

disciplinary approach, Roher (2009) pointed out that additional resources were needed to guarantee the academic and non-academic support (p. 14). For some school leaders in Manitoba, a re-entry meeting met the support criteria and the limited or available support was usually provided after the student had served the suspension time. Accordingly, suspensions with interventions will be a punitive measure based on school leaders' belief about punitive and positive discipline in the absence of timely supports and interventions.

The results also showed that some school leaders did find the *PSA* as a tool that encouraged punishment. In this context, the findings showed that sections of the *Act* were left to the interpretation of school leaders. This ambiguity was evident with the use of the term "conduct injurious to the school environment" because there was no clear definition. The ambiguous nature was also evident where some school leaders did not always agree with school policies. However, they were obliged to follow them because of the professional responsibilities that emanated from the *PSA*. This was supported by section 55.1(2) that stated: "in discharging his or her responsibilities under subsection (1), the principal must act in accordance with the policies of the school board" (PSA, 1987, p. 143). This obligation was also confirmed by School Leader Three's statements regarding not always agreeing with policies but following them based on professional responsibilities.

Behaviour Consultant One supported the notion that a suspension and/or expulsion may be necessary for extreme circumstances but cautioned that ". . . we have to be really careful around how we use those kinds of strategies that kids just feel that they are pushed away and there's no hope . . . [because] I think that makes people really unsafe too". Though that view was shared, Behaviour Consultant One said the following relating to professionalism and policy: "I think there can be bad policy and I'm not sure you're being professional if you follow bad

policy either" and based on this response, a sense of professionalism will discourage the use of "bad" policies. Behaviour Consultant One further explained that: "but we [can] change those [*PSA*, divisional policies, or codes of conduct]. They weren't like given from God or something, like they are man-made, and our laws change all the time" and accordingly, laws should change to reflect the current societal context. In this regard, Behaviour Consultant One mentioned that:

> We used to say if you were homosexual, that was against the law. So, is it professional to say well, that's a law and we should still follow that? No, it was professional to say, you know what, times have changed. We are smarter now I think than we used to be and we know that's not an illegal thing.

Consequently, a law that was logical many years ago may be outdated now and hence, educational professionals will advocate for change (Behaviour Consultant One). In this regard, the *PSA* was enacted in 1987 and has had several amendments over the years. From the findings relating to suspension and school leaders' belief about punitive and positive discipline based on their experiences, it can be deduced that the *PSA* needs to be reviewed in this regard.

The results also showed, that though some school leaders found that the term suspension had a negative connotation toward it, it was still an important tool afforded by the *PSA*. For this reason, it was interpreted that the *Act* gave school leaders the confidence needed to perform certain roles. In this regard, school leaders could suspend students based on safety reasons without fearing repercussions. The findings also indicated that the *PSA* gave school leaders the power to carry out searches in their buildings that police officers could only do with a search warrant. This claim was also supported by Peace Officer One who said: ". . . the school division has the right to go through their lockers. They can walk into any locker they want and crank that lock open. So, they have much more power and authority in their own school" than police

officers. Though there are no noticeable sections of the *PSA* that refer to searches, it can be concluded that school properties such as lockers are owned by the school division. For this reason, employees (principals) working for the division have the right to search divisional properties, and in this regard, I have noticed registration forms where students were requested to share their lock codes or keys with school administration. Though these forms were not given to me, they were significant to the process of phenomenological imaginative variation where there are different possibilities to unearth the truth about the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994, p. 99).

Although school leaders have the authority to search, section 8 of the *Charter* states that "everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure" (*Charter, 1982)* and hence, guaranteeing some privacy. In the precedent case, *M. v. M. (M.R.)* (1998), the Supreme Court ruled that though students have privacy rights, "the reasonable expectation of privacy, although it exists, may be diminished in some circumstances . . ." (para. 33). For this reason, school leaders had the authority to search students based on the responsibility that is conferred on them to maintain discipline (*M. v. M. (M.R.),* 1998, para. 56). Nonetheless, the school leader must have a reasonable suspicion to search as established in the ruling as: "information received from one student considered to be credible, information received from more than one student, a teacher's or principal's own observations, or any combination of these pieces of information which the relevant authority considers to be credible" (*M. v. M. (M.R.),* 1998, para. 50). Accordingly, random search of a student or group of students, as in the case of *R. v. A.M* (2008), the Sniffer Dog case, will be deemed unlawful. Therefore, the *PSA* and case laws give some school leaders the confidence and the supportive legal framework needed to maintain discipline and safety in their schools.

The findings also showed that students had the right to an education as outlined in the *PSA.* This right is documented in section 259(1) where students between the ages of 6 and 21 have the right to attend school (PSA, 1987, p. 239). Though it was highlighted in the findings that students had the right to an education, the results showed that that education may not necessarily happen in a school. I must reiterate though that section 259(1) specifically refers to students having the right to attend school. Section 41(1)(a) of the *Act* also supports that right by declaring that school boards must "provide adequate school accommodation for the resident persons who have the right to attend school as provided in section 259" (PSA, 1987, p. 101). Additionally, this educational right was also echoed in section 58.9(1) that states: "subject to the provisions of this Act, a person who has the right to attend school under section 259 may enrol or be enrolled in a program offered by any school in Manitoba" (PSA, 1987, p. 154). I have discussed in Chapter Two that exclusionary measures such as suspension deny students this educational right. The findings showed that suspension was an important tool for respite and to keep schools safe. However, the findings also showed that positive discipline was better able to keep schools and students safe, without denying them their right to an education.

It can be concluded from the results that there were overwhelming analyses to suggest that the *PSA* would not necessarily promote school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. As a result, when asked the question, "given your experience, how might the *PSA* influence your administrator's view toward positive discipline?", Teacher One said:

> I just think that because of what the policy is, it doesn't [fit] well but it is difficult not to follow policy. So, if there was something that happened and a suspension was required, then I feel like it would be hard to get around that, because that is the policy. So, I think

> that is somewhat of an influence for administrators and even administrators who are using non-punitive measures.

Additionally, the ambiguity and contradictory nature of sections of the *Act*; right to education and use of suspension, seemingly create an imbalance for students. Therefore, it can be further concluded that school leaders' beliefs as opposed to the *PSA*, motivated school leaders to journey from punitive to positive discipline. The results also showed that the *PSA* was complemented by the *EAA.*

**Education Administration Act.** The findings showed that the *EAA* and the *PSA* share similar data relating to school-based discipline. The use of suspension was also legally available to school superintendents, principals, and teachers in s. 4(1) (d) of the *Act*. For Teacher One, the *EAA* had not influenced disciplinary approaches utilized as a teacher because:

> Most teachers don't even know that they have the capability to do that [suspend]. I didn't know until a few years ago when we brought this up and I had no idea. Nobody else did, so it is not something that's well known that teachers can do that [suspend].

Therefore, it can be deduced that the lack of awareness for some teachers relating to the right to suspend students may have prevented more suspensions. However, Teacher One also mentioned that the *Act* may have influenced the disciplinary measures utilized by the school leader. Teacher One further mentioned that the *EAA* and *PSA* were similar in light of the punitive measure that was afforded to school leaders and based on the notion that both acts would not complement the use of positive discipline. Hence, the conclusion can be drawn that the *Act* directly influenced how school leaders utilized positive discipline. Additionally, it was further logical from the findings that school leaders' belief system, as opposed to the *EAA,* enabled them to commence a shift from punitive to positive discipline where human rights principles were observed.

**Human Rights Code.** The results demonstrated that the *Human Rights Code* (1987) influenced the manner in which school-based discipline was carried out. Based on the results, section 9(2) of the *Human Rights Code* has had the most influence on how school-based discipline was perceived and actualized. In this regard, disciplinary measures were balanced against fairness, to prevent discrimination based on the outlined protected characteristics in section 9(2). Accordingly, this section was consistent with guaranteed *Charter* rights and the *Code* is seemingly a refined version of some of those rights. The main aspect of the *Code* was related to how students were treated. For this reason, Teacher One said: "I think subconsciously that it [the *Code*] influences everybody in the way that they treat people and how we interact with people". This subconscious application of the *Code* was consistent with school leaders' belief and utilization of positive discipline.

For school leaders, students had to be treated fairly in all circumstances. This was evident with School Leader One's anaphylactic experience where the rights of Child A and Child B were simultaneously observed. Furthermore, from the results, the analysis was reached that positive discipline was better able to observe human rights. Similarly, Behaviour Consultant One said positive discipline and the *Code* are similar. They are ". . . really about those core values of respect, and understanding, and fairness. I think those kind of core things that guide all of that legislation are the same core principles that guide positive discipline" (Behaviour Consultant One). For these reasons, it can be concluded that the *Human Rights Code* helped to maintain positive discipline in light of equity and inclusion. The maintaining of positive discipline further ensures that schools provide a safe and caring school environment as established in the *SSC*.

**Safe Schools Charter.** The findings indicated that the goals of the *SSC* (2004) that amended various acts relating to schools providing safe and caring environments, were better

achieved with the utilization of positive discipline. Based on the results, it can be inferred that punitive discipline did not provide for a caring and safe environment. This analysis was based on the negative effects of punitive discipline on students' academic performance, psychological well-being, behaviour, and overall personal development. However, the reverse can be interpreted with the utilization of positive discipline. The greatest success of positive discipline was the effectiveness of reducing or eliminating negative behaviours that can often lead to unsafe school environments.

The results also showed the *SSC* was a valuable piece of legislation for school leaders because it enabled them to avoid legal problems. After careful analysis, I find this premise to be logical based on the fact that the *SSC* reiterates sections from the *PSA* and the *EAA*. Similar to those acts, there is content for codes of conduct without any disciplinary measure given for breaches of the content described. These documents reveal a belief that behaviour should be managed or controlled by authority figures in schools. They further highlight that there should be punitive consequences for inappropriate behaviour. For this reason, the notion that the *SSC* was the closest piece of positive discipline legislation, suggested the need for a positive disciplinary framework. The *PSA* and *EAA* support punitive exclusionary measures that do not sustainably support a safe and caring school environment, as previously discussed. In this manner, there was no direct correlation with the *Act* and its contribution to positive discipline. This analysis was further solidified based on the conclusions drawn relating to the *PSA* and *EAA* that they did not promote school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. Accordingly, the *SSC* in relation to positive discipline can be viewed with two lenses; positive discipline can provide a safe and caring school and the *SSC* relies on punitive measures outlined in the *PSA* that do not always maintain a safe and caring school.

My analyses show that some laws have more of a direct impact on the utilization of school-based discipline; punitive and positive. As a result of this impact, legal awareness is important to ensure that school leaders maintain professional standards relating to the duty of care that is conferred on them by common law and by way of the *PSA*. The *Foundation Case*, which saw the end of corporal punishment in 2004, is an example of how the law influences discipline. It also shows that parents and teachers owe a different standard of care to children and students respectively. The study also indicates that when corporal punishment was ended, by way of the *Foundation Case*, punitive discipline became the "new" corporal punishment.

There are federal laws that affected school leaders' journey from punitive to positive discipline; *Criminal Code*, the *YCJA*, and the *Charter*. The *Criminal Code* has implications for both students and school practitioners. There are certain behaviours for both students and teachers that violated the *Code*. The discussion showed that for students, theft, assault, gang and drug-related episodes are the major *Criminal Code* violations and for teachers, assault. Based on the context relating to students, it was discussed that punitive discipline did not reduce or eliminate behaviours that violated the *Code.* Consequently, the type and nature of behaviours that violated the *Code* have influenced school leaders' shift to utilizing positive discipline.

The *YCJA* did not directly contribute to school leaders' utilization of positive discipline. However, the *Act* is utilized to ensure that students who violated the *Criminal Code* are treated fairly, especially when the judicial process was engaged by school leaders acting as agents of the state and/or the police. Also, the *YCJA* had limited but noticeable similarities to positive discipline. In this regard, some mistakes were seen as learning opportunities and there were proactive and preventative measures utilized by peace officers to prevent negative behaviours and maintain discipline. The *Charter* had a direct influence on how school leaders

conceptualized and utilized disciplinary approaches. The conceptualization and utilization stemmed from guaranteed equal and legal rights. As a result, the *Charter* has had a positive influence on school-based discipline by motivating school leaders to utilize disciplinary approaches that did not violate guaranteed rights and freedoms.

There were also provincial laws that affected school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline; the *PSA, EAA, Human Rights Code,* and *SSC*. The *PSA* is the main governing document for education in Manitoba. With the exception of the *Human Rights Code,* all the other mentioned provincial laws had similarities to the *PSA*. However, such a powerful piece of legislation did not support school leaders' shift from punitive to positive discipline based on the discussion. The *PSA,* inhibits school leaders' journeys based on the legal but ambiguous use of exclusionary measures, such as suspension. The *EAA*'s influence was similar to that of the *PSA* because it empowered school leaders and teachers with suspension as a disciplinary measure. Consequently, it was school leaders' belief system as opposed to the *EAA* that motivated the shift from punitive to positive discipline.

The *Human Rights Code* had a direct influence on how school-based discipline was perceived and carried out. Accordingly, disciplinary measures had to be fair and non-discriminatory in light of the protected characteristics. These protected characteristics encouraged the use of positive discipline that was beneficial to everybody. The *SSC* states that schools must provide a safe and caring environment. However, that environment was not always ideal with the utilization of punitive measures afforded by the *PSA, EAA* and reiterated in the *SSC*. For this reason, there was limited to no influence on school leaders' shift from punitive to positive discipline. In light of these contexts, the next chapter will discuss the implications and

recommendations relating to school leaders journeying from punitive to positive discipline. I then state the scholarly contributions and conclude with a discussion related to future research.

# Chapter Six: Implications, Recommendations, Contributions, and Conclusions

This research had two main purposes. The first purpose was to determine how school leaders experienced a shift in paradigm from punitive to positive school-based discipline. The study showed, that school leaders motivated by the push and pull factors relating to punitive and positive discipline, were enabled to embark on this journey. Similar to any journey, there were smooth roads and those characterized by bumps and bruises. The second purpose was to determine how federal and provincial laws might influence school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. The research showed that there were specific federal and provincial laws that were more supportive of school leaders as they journeyed from punitive to positive school-based discipline. For these reasons, the research has implications and recommendations for school leaders, provincial policy or lawmakers and recommendation for future research.

## School Leaders: Implications and Recommendations

Though the school leaders who participated in this study have not fully transitioned from punitive to positive based discipline, they recognize that one's ability to enact positive discipline is highly dependent on their belief systems and the belief systems of the teachers in their schools. In addition, for school leaders to commence or continue on their journey, their mindset or belief system must be aligned to the following tenets of positive discipline; there is good in everybody, there are not good and bad people, everybody makes mistakes, and mistakes are opportunities to learn. Accordingly, school leaders must sincerely believe that students, regardless of ethnicity, class, race, religion, sexual orientation and/or economic status, can attain self-actualization if they are included, treated fairly, and given opportunities to grow. Given these diverse contexts, it

is suggested that educators have an understanding of the systemic inequities related to colonialism and structural racism that manifest in the school system. PD opportunities related to learning about inequities, would better position educators to facilitate the inclusion of all students.

For those school leaders who possess a positive belief system and who are ready to commence the transition, there are several factors to be considered. It is highly recommended that school leaders become more knowledgeable about the negative impacts of punitive discipline and also, the benefits associated with positive discipline. In this regard, training is an important component for the school leader. Training takes time and for some school leaders, it took several hours of professional development and years of learning, to get a good understanding of positive discipline. This understanding and knowledge are critical for the effectiveness of positive discipline. Therefore, training related to control theory and restorative justice aligned approaches such as restitution, the Seven Teachings, and discipline with dignity are recommended. These approaches reflect the position that "students do not get involved in long-term learning because they are threatened or rewarded by teachers" (Glasser, 1985, p. 241) but because they are intrinsically motivated. Additionally, these suggested areas of training can help to facilitate a shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. However, it should be pointed out that ongoing training may be necessary to maintain the effectiveness of positive discipline, especially in contexts where staff may change. For these reasons, the training also enables school leaders to be confident in sharing the belief system with staff members and through collaboration, create a vision for the journey.

School leaders must also understand and appreciate that staff and students are valued first-class passengers on this journey. Consequently, they should be prioritized and treated with

premium services. Therefore, the support of staff is critical for positive discipline to be successful. Collaboration with staff is needed to support the implementation plan and to evaluate and maintain positive discipline for everyone to benefit. Though the diversity of the group may make the journey challenging, breaking down or eliminating these challenges is worthwhile. In this context, training, communication, and shared leadership or decision-making are recommended. Hence, a flexible leadership style is required, though it was pointed out that sometimes there has to be a top-down approach. However, as soon as possible, the top-down approach must be diffused into a shared approach where teachers and students can contribute to the social contract that will guide their practices. For example, the school leader may be responsible for educating teachers and students about positive discipline. Teachers may help to facilitate that learning for students in their respective classes through circle meetings and students can be peer mediators. Accordingly, at some point depending on the context, there should be a decentralization of power to foster collaboration and relationships between the school leader and staff, school leader and students, staff and students, and school and the community.

Without relationships, the journey from punitive to positive discipline is destined to crash. A good and well-maintained relationship is the epicentre of positive discipline. If relationships are absent and/or not maintained, then positive discipline is likely to fail because of the damage to the epicentre. Relationships are fostered and maintained through school and community activities. Additionally, disciplinary violations are situations in which relationships are built and maintained. Therefore, it is suggested that school leaders seek ways to create and maintain relationships. Additionally, language and tone play a critical role in creating and maintaining relationships and meeting the needs of students. The findings indicate that a

transition is required from failure type language involving shame and guilt to positive language that may help support students in meeting their needs. Failure type language may prevent students from expressing their needs and making logical decisions in the prefrontal cortex of their brain. However, the use of positive language demonstrates that students can make mistakes while trying to meet their needs. For this reason, positive language helps to stabilize the identity, connect to beliefs, and validate students' needs, to give them the opportunity to meet those needs in a better way. Figure 1 suggests positive language that educators can use to support students to better meet their needs. Though the categories are sequenced, the findings suggest that there is no specific order in which these phrases should be used as each situation may be unique.

| **Category** | **Suggested Positive Language** |
|---|---|
| **Stabilize Students' Identity** | • As adults, we make mistakes too.<br>• Everybody makes mistakes.<br>• I'm so glad this happened.<br>• I have been in a similar situation.<br>• I know how you feel or I feel . . .<br>• Mistakes are learning opportunities.<br>• Mistakes are not bad. |
| **Connect to Students' Beliefs** | • Given your values, do you think that might be the best choice you have made today?<br>• Could you have made a different choice?<br>• How would you like to be treated, if this happened to you? What would you like the outcome to be?<br>• How can we fix the problem? How do we fix this?<br>• I know that you value honesty and/or respect (state the value(s) here). What happened?<br>• What kind of person do you want to be in this type of situation?<br>• If you could have found a better way based on what you know to be true or believe in, would you have done that? How could you do things differently next time? |
| **Validate Students' Needs** | • How do you think that you might have hurt someone's feelings while trying to achieve this particular need (name the need here)?<br>• I know you are not bad, I know you did this for a reason.<br>• I know you are a good person so there must be a reason why you did this . . .<br>• I know you did this for a reason, and I know that there must be something that you were trying to get with this choice you made.<br>• What needs were you trying to meet from that behaviour? What did you want to achieve? |

*Figure 1*. Positive language suggested by participants aligned with restitution literature (Gossen, 2007; Real Restitution, 2020).

Additionally, the journey from punitive to positive discipline will not be a smooth one. It will be characterized by challenges and really heart-wrenching ones identified as bumps and bruises. Accordingly, school leaders must be psychologically prepared to venture on a lonely and sometimes bumpy/hurtful journey. In this context, it is highly recommended that school leaders place importance on self-care. Self-care may include reflection where the school leader uses strategies such as journaling or talking with a colleague to critically reflect on their own feelings that arise when they are disciplining students. Furthermore, self-care enables school leaders to protect themselves from the frustration and anger that they could experience. Exercising self-care may be delegating tasks, reflecting on and reframing challenges, doing something for fun, exercising or spending time with family and friends (Cabeen, 2018). Accordingly, school leaders must be adequately prepared by not only being knowledgeable, but also have the physical and psychological support needed to maintain the journey. Relating to support, there are not always extrinsic supports available. It is also suggested that school leaders remain open-minded while creating opportunities for others to join the journey. Despite the bruises, leaders do create opportunities because it is the right thing to do. In other words, school leaders will be practicing what they are preaching about positive discipline. However, at the same time, school leaders should remember that they are doing their best in light of all circumstances; they are doing something good that will help students be better and purposeful.

As with any journey, laws governing the roads must be respected and followed. With this in mind, there are federal and provincial laws that may influence the journey from punitive to positive discipline. The laws that will specifically influence the journey are the *Criminal Code, Charter, Human Rights Code, PSA,* and *EAA*. I suggest that school leaders pay close attention to the sections that will affect their transition and see how best they can balance those laws with

their respective belief system. However, one thing that I will recommend is the continuous use of positive discipline. As school leaders navigate those tensions of laws that support punitive measures and their own beliefs, they can hold on to the tenets that everybody makes mistakes, mistakes are learning opportunities, and everybody has good in them. Though some of the laws may influence school leaders to utilize punitive measures, the effective utilization of positive discipline can eliminate situations in which punitive measures might be warranted based on others' belief system. In the *PSA*, that filters into most other provincial law or policies relating to discipline, there were no contexts given in which exclusionary measures such as suspensions should be utilized. Accordingly, the use of suspension is based on people's discretion or belief. Therefore, school leaders should continue to be positive and be an advocate for change to prevent suspension from being the new corporal punishment tool. Some leaders in the field of education who know the damage of punitive discipline have begun to think about the journey and/or have embarked on the journey. Therefore, acting on those positive tenets is extremely important to end the systemic failures associated with suspension. The psychological trauma can be compared to those experiences of students in residential schools; it has lasting negative effects. For some students, they are suspended because the system has failed them. Tina Fontaine's case highlights this systemic failure and how structural racism continues to perpetuate inequity in the society. Given those contexts, I will like to recommend the I-RISE Model as tool to eliminate the use of suspension and support students to achieve self-actualization.

**The I-RISE Disciplinary Model**

Following the analysis of the positive disciplinary models and their benefits, I devised the I-RISE model. Feedback on the model was sought and given by most participants of the study. I-RISE is an acronym that represents Interact to build or maintain relationships, Respond, Identify,

Support, and Encourage. Similar to the flexible nature of positive discipline that is manifested through different approaches, the I-RISE model can be utilized with any positive disciplinary approach. However, it should be noted that not every disciplinary issue may require the I-RISE process. Some issues may simply require a brief conversation and a reminder of positive guidelines or expectations. Accordingly, the model through the various stages emphasizes the importance of relationships and supports such as leadership, language, and the legislation, that are critical to the effectiveness of positive discipline. The effectiveness of positive discipline is essential to ensure that students achieve self-actualization. Based on the social responsibility of the school, self-actualization is important in fulfilling this responsibility. For these reasons, the I-RISE model provides five simple stages for school leaders and teachers to respond to students' respective needs and simultaneously, maintain positive discipline.

**Interact.** At this stage, the school leader or teacher interacts with the student by initiating a conversation with the student to get an understanding of the situation. This conversation should also open avenues to either build or maintain relationships. Consequently, it was mentioned that one of ". . . the key[s] in your building is building relationships with your students. . . Once you have a relationship, [then] part of that relationship to me is communication and open dialogue" (School Leader Three) with students. At this stage, therefore, having or maintaining a relationship with the student makes it easier to proceed to the other stages. Furthermore, relationships are important to effectively maintain positive discipline by promoting a sense of belonging and for fostering inclusion. However, it should be observed that this interaction may not always take place instantly. The student may be angry or experiencing hurt and require a timeout to calm down. Being calm is vital to ensure the brain is in a position to make good decisions. However, school leaders and teachers must acknowledge that a timeout does not

translate to punishment (Behaviour Consultant One). Accordingly, I do not view suspension as a way for students to calm. Suspension has a negative stigma that can psychologically affect and/or alienate the student. These effects may be detrimental to relationship building and/or maintenance that are essential for positive discipline. The timeout could be taking a break from classes, listening to music, shooting hoops at the gym, reading in the library and/or even going home. However, the school leader or teacher must ensure that the student understands that they are there to help at a time when he or she is ready.

**Respond**. At this stage, the school leader or teacher responds to the problem. Responding to the problem may require an understanding of the issues that were not previously obtained in step one. For example, the student was not calm and would not benefit from moving on in the process. After the issues are understood, the school leader or teacher along with the student should identify the problem. At this stage, it is still a conversation and language is important. Consequently, the use of shameful language and/or the language of guilt must be avoided. These types of language may discourage students from sharing information and push them to that part of the brain that does not enable logical decisions. The aim is to respond to the issue by collecting as much information as possible. Though information is needed, I would suggest attending fully by employing the conversational skills described by Lipton and Wellman (2013) (p. 27) to have an authentic conversation through active listening. The focus should be on the student and not on documenting information and for this reason, you may have to make detailed notes immediately after the conversation. Accordingly, the school leader or teacher should also occasionally inform the student that they are doing their best to help the student solve the problem and support him or her.

**Identify**. At this stage, the school leader or teacher identifies the specific needs that the student was trying to meet from the inappropriate conduct. Needs vary and are unique for each student. Identifying these specific needs will enable the school leader or teacher to support the student. According to Maslow, there are physiological needs such as the need for food, water, shelter, clothing, and sleep. There are needs relating to love and belonging as well as safety needs such as healthcare (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018, p. 121). Additionally, there are needs for freedom, fun, and power (Real Restitution, 2020). After identifying the specific need/s, the school leader or teacher should let the student know that the inappropriate conduct will not meet that specific need(s). At this juncture, the school leader or teacher has to be very careful in ensuring that they do not trigger guilt or shame. For this reason, the next stage should be applied immediately.

**Support**. At this stage, the school leader/teacher supports the student by recognizing and acknowledging the need(s) identified as important. In this regard, the school leader or teacher should let the student understand that there was a reason for carrying out that inappropriate action. Also, the school leader or teacher should try to maintain calm by letting the student know that everyone makes mistakes, mistakes are opportunities to learn, and that he/she is not a bad person because of making a mistake. Thereafter, supports and interventions should be provided based on the specific need(s) identified. There may be several supports needed such as academic and mental health related supports. These supports may be provided by the school through academic plans, or from the resource teacher and/or guidance counsellor, or from other institutions that are external to the school. However, where external support is needed, the student should not be suspended. Logically, the student may not be able to attend classes or school based on the nature of support that is required. But if students are suspended, they may

not benefit from the needed support in its entirety. The student mindset has to be in a place where he or she can benefit from the support being provided.

**Encourage**. At this stage, the school leader or teacher checks on the progress of the student regarding the supports or interventions they are receiving. It may be necessary to have a conversation with the student and/or seek updates from individuals or institutions that are providing supports or interventions. The student may need further or continuous supports or interventions to enable him or her to rise above the challenges faced in an attempt to meet the specific need/s identified. If further supports are needed, the student should be included in the conversation as appropriate, as far as it is possible. The student should develop the strength needed to learn from this mistake and be able to solve a similar problem in the future. For this reason, reflection may be good for the student to determine whether the conduct was the right thing to do, to assess if there is a better way, and to decide if he or she would want to learn a better way (Behaviour Consultant One). It is all about intrinsic motivation to do the right thing because it is the right thing to do. As a result, the school leader or teacher may apply positive consequences to further encourage the student to fix the problem and/or learn from the mistake. As mentioned earlier, punitive measures may teach that something is serious but do not solve the problem. The measures do not enable anyone to learn from their mistake and become stronger knowing that they are not a bad person. Punitive discipline is translated to failure, unlike positive discipline that gives hope. Hence, the school leader or teacher should encourage the student to return to the class or school setting strengthened, based on their values, what the student believes is important, and what the student believes about himself or herself (Behaviour Consultant One) given that there is good in everybody.

The I-RISE model (Figure 2) is a representation of the findings of my study. The arrow of the figure shows a linear progression of the model. The I-RISE model is strength-based and the colour of the stars gets stronger as students are supported based on their respective need(s). The stars signify hope and students should be strengthened and better prepared to achieve their goals following the five stages. Positive learning, language, leadership, and legislation are foundational blocks for the model. The I-RISE model would be most effective when all the supporting blocks are in place. Therefore, the model was designed as a tool to guide school leaders and teachers to respond to disciplinary issues and to give every student hope.

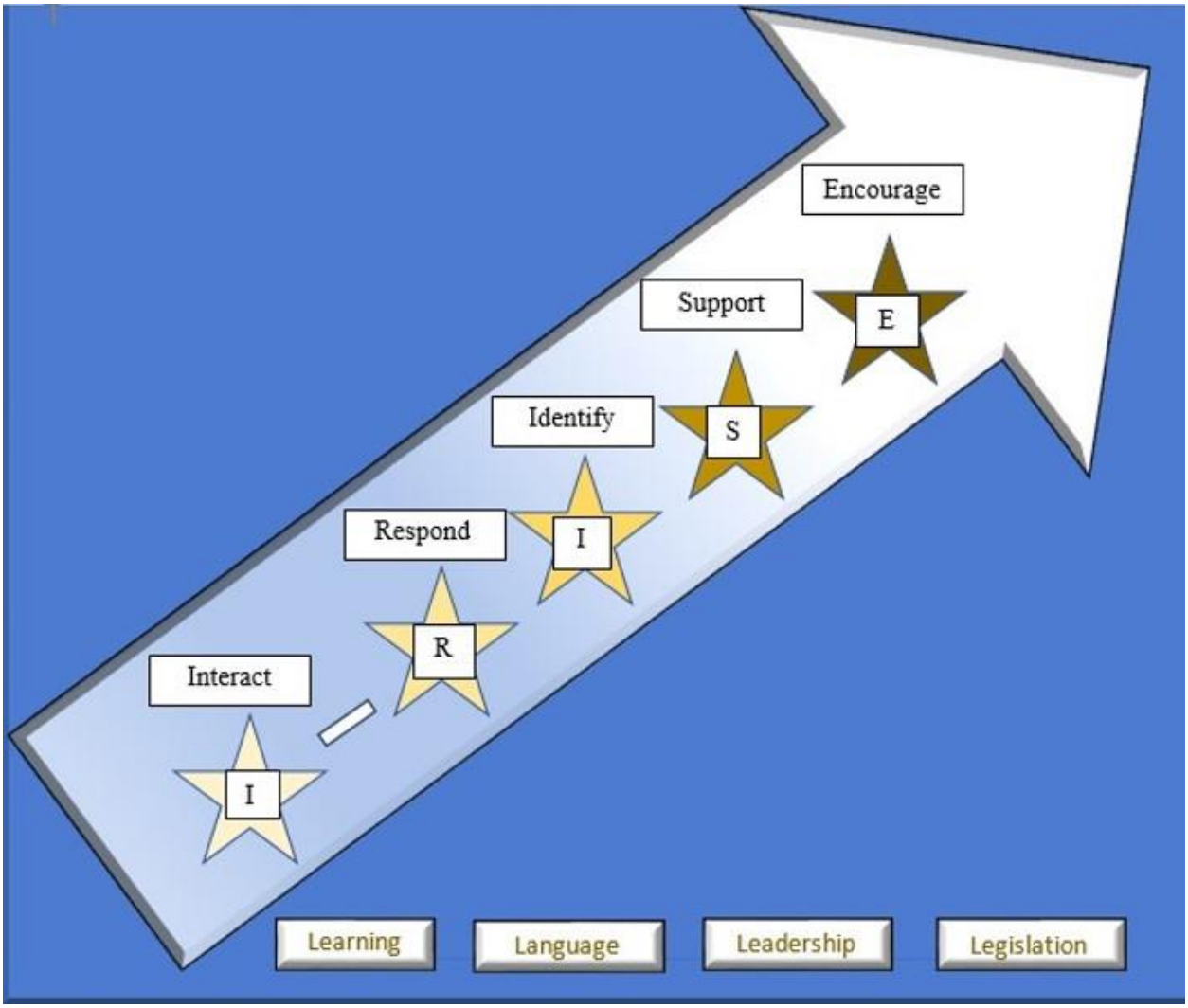



*Figure 2*. The five star I-RISE model.

For me, hope signifies that despite a student's respective and unique needs or challenges, that student can overcome those hurdles and then say "I-RISE". In this regard, a section from the feedback received on the model stated:

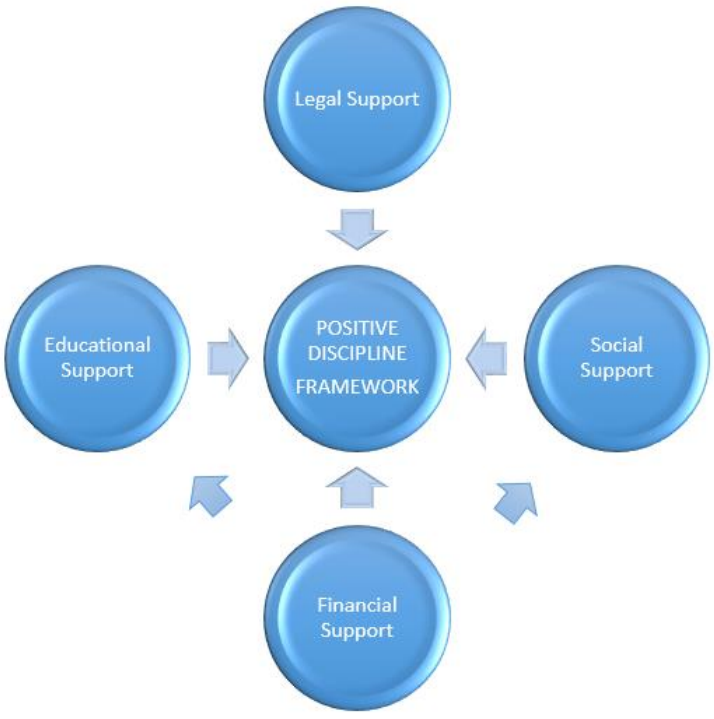
> I like the term I-RISE, it's powerful but it's also empowering. So, to me, if someone were to adopt this, then that becomes part of your language in your school, and part of your culture. So then, you believe that as a group of people that "I-RISE", so I like it. To me, it wouldn't matter what level you would be implementing it, people can understand. Whether you're in kindergarten, you "RISE" and even grade 12 you "RISE" above. It has commonality. (School Leader Three)

Accordingly, the I-RISE model is to empower school leaders, teachers, and students. It empowers school leaders and teachers by giving them a tool to provide a safe and caring school environment for students by maintaining discipline. It empowers students by enabling them to find the answers within themselves to fix the problem. I find Watchel et al.'s (as cited in Payne & Welch, 2018) statement to be profound in light of I-RISE: "human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to or for them" (p. 226). Consequently, the I-RISE model does not take away power from school leaders and teachers nor does it make students powerless. It is a win-win model with the potential to make everyone happy based on this context. If students are able to rise above their respective challenges, it means that collectively as a school and community, *we* rise. However, the I-RISE model is centered on subjectivity and interpersonal variables such as communication and relationship. Therefore, the model might not capture all the messiness and complexity of applying the different steps to discipline scenarios given these contexts that cannot be ignored. Nonetheless, I

hope this model will be a guide for school leaders that will stimulate change and influence future policy.

## Provincial Policy or Lawmakers: Implications and Recommendations

Since educational institutions are part of the society that are governed by laws, policy or lawmakers have a critical role to play in ensuring that school leaders shift from punitive to positive discipline. Logically, the punitive and traditional use of discipline has been ineffective because it has not fixed the problem. This is evident in the high numbers of students that are suspended each year. The concerns that school leaders face, are getting more complex and are evolving with time. However, this study shows that the use of positive discipline can reduce or eliminate negative behaviours that hinder students from maximizing their academic potential. However, a positive discipline framework (Figure 3) is needed to promote and maintain school leaders' shift from punitive to positive discipline. The findings indicate that legal, educational, financial, and social supports are needed for a positive discipline framework to be effective; and



that financial support is essential to enable schools to provide the social and educational supports essential to student success.

Legislated support is needed to facilitate shift and effectiveness of positive discipline. The *PSA* and EAA are two of the main legal frameworks that govern educational institutions in the province. However, as demonstrated in this research, they do not necessarily encourage school leaders to shift from punitive to positive discipline. It was shown that these two pieces of legislation tend to inhibit school leaders who are on the journey because they are bound by law to follow policy. The biggest concern from the study was relating to suspension. The law empowers superintendents, school leaders, and teachers with the right to suspend students. The situations in which a suspension is warranted are not clearly defined but I will assume that it would be for "conduct injurious to the school environment". Again, these "injurious" conducts are not defined, and one can only assume that this was in relation to section 47.1(2) of the *PSA*.

*Figure 3*. Supports needed for positive discipline framework.

It is with these contexts in mind that I am recommending a review of these two legislations in light of punitive and positive discipline. Furthermore, I am also recommending that policymakers consider a positive school-based framework that will encourage school leaders to utilize positive discipline. Some school leaders, and by extension school divisions, have recognized the benefits of positive discipline and how it can improve the lives of residents in Manitoba. However, as previously indicated, the laws do not adequately support schools and divisions maximizing those benefits. Though suspension is a tool that school leaders deemed useful, the participants in this study made important differentiations between suspension with and without interventions. For the school leaders who believe in positive discipline, a mere

suspension is a punitive measure. However, suspension with interventions and support is seen as a positive measure to improve students' lives based on their respective needs. Nonetheless, the study shows that the term suspension had a negative connotation toward it. For this reason, I am also suggesting that the term be reconsidered in this context, if the legislation is being reviewed.

To have a positive discipline framework, political leaders must ensure that education is appropriately supported. For this reason, positive discipline will need financial and educational support for sustainability and ultimately, effectiveness. Financial support will be needed for training in areas of control theory and restorative justice aligned approaches. Based on my study, these approaches are currently used in Manitoba and are associated with benefits such as inclusion, improved behaviour, creating a safe school environment, and increased academic achievement. Funding will also be needed to provide the necessary interventions, professionals, and support facilities such as counselling and treatment centres. These supports will be required to respond to the varying needs of students and to eliminate exclusionary practices that do not address the needs of students. For these reasons, this framework should be carefully thought through and supported with the needed resources. If there are not enough supports, then the province will be in a position similar to Ontario, where the progressive disciplinary model regressed to a punitive model. Hence, I will further suggest that the province invests in a manner where the positive disciplinary framework is a sustainable legislation that will support the continuous utilization of positive discipline.

Additionally, the study highlighted the need for educational support relating to positive discipline. The research showed that university teacher-based programs in the province can aid with school leaders' shift from punitive to positive discipline. Consequently, I am recommending as part of the positive disciplinary framework that each university teacher-based program

develops a course for positive school-based disciplinary approaches for students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. It was highlighted that classroom management courses were not sufficient in this context. Consequently, new teachers joining the staff would be exposed to aspects of positive discipline and this would better support school leaders on their journey. Furthermore, if that course were to be developed, it would mean that over time, the money being spent on training may be reduced. Similar to teachers, the framework should also address training for educational assistants, bus drivers, and other staff members. Also, the study shows that law and school-based discipline are inextricably linked and for this reason, as a recommendation, a course relating to education and the law should be offered to teachers and school leaders. Based on these contexts, the study contributes to the gaps that were identified in the literature.

## Scholarly Contributions

I have made several scholarly contributions based on the findings related to school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. Since there were benefits associated with the utilization of positive discipline, the contributions made are to encourage more school leaders to transition and to further support the effectiveness of positive discipline. Accordingly, there are several recommendations for school leaders and policymakers. Concerning school leaders, the contributions highlighted the need for educational preparation in the context of control theory. My research showed that there were successes with the utilization of restorative justice aligned approaches such as restitution, the Seven Teachings, and Discipline with Dignity. Therefore, these are approaches that school leaders could utilize to guide their transition. Additionally, the suggested positive language (Figure 1) and I-RISE model (Figure 2) are tools that school leaders can use to maintain positive discipline (Figure 3) and better support

students to meet their needs. For policymakers, legislative support is required to encourage the shift and maintain the use and effectiveness of positive discipline. I specifically outlined the sections of the *PSA* and *EAA* that are hindering the shift and limiting the effectiveness of positive discipline. Furthermore, I demonstrated the need for funding to support educational and social programs in the province and to prevent the Ontario context where the absence of the requisite supports made the legislated progressive model punitive.

## Conclusion

This research was limited to three school leaders' experiences shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline. These experiences were further validated by three other participants who worked with the phenomenon studied. For school leaders, the paradigm shift started years ago and was described as a journey. There were motivating push and pull factors that encouraged school leaders to embark on the journey. Though the journey was encouraged by supports, some challenges affected it. Similar to any road user, some laws affected school leaders' journeys. There are federal and provincial laws that either supported or inhibited school leaders' shift from punitive to positive discipline. Though this research contributes to the gaps that were found in the literature, further research is needed for areas related to the phenomenon studied.

### Future Research

I believe that additional research will be essential to truly develop a positive disciplinary framework that will respond to provincial challenges and support schools to shift from utilizing punitive to positive discipline. Also, the research indicated that since positive discipline was a belief system, there were several approaches to discipline being used in Manitoba that are already grounded in those beliefs. This is a promising finding because this adaptable nature of

positive discipline may indicate that more students can benefit from approaches. However, further research is needed to evaluate how beneficial these approaches are for traditionally marginalized groups. From the study, these models were restitution, Seven Teachings, discipline with dignity and restorative justice. The PAX model was utilized by some school leaders as a positive disciplinary approach, but the study also showed that the model was not always consistent with school leaders' beliefs about positive discipline. Accordingly, future research relating to the PAX model is needed to find out whether or not it is a mechanism used to control students' behaviour, similar to punitive discipline. The I-RISE model was developed as a guide for school leaders to respond to disciplinary challenges and better support students. However, it would be interesting to study the I-RISE model in practice and explore the interpersonal variables that are connected to its effectiveness. Moreover, it is suggested that research related to how the model could be used by school leaders in their interactions with teachers, and educators in their interactions with parents be done. Furthermore, since communication is an integral part of the I-RISE model, I am recommending a study related to the use of the model with different age groups.

Also, based on the findings, male students may be suspended more than female students and for this reason, further research is needed to determine and respond to the factors that may result in this gender disparity. There was indication that suspension, a legal punitive measure, is often utilized to maintain safety in schools. However, the findings suggested that with the use of positive discipline, unsafe behaviours may be eliminated. As a result, further research is required to determine if changes in provincial laws, specifically the *PSA, EAA,* and *SCC,* would alter school administrators' utilization of suspension as a tool to maintain safe and caring schools. Additionally, language is critical to the effectiveness of positive discipline, but failure type

language that may frame a student as a criminal or a bad kid may hinder the support required for students to meet their needs. Given this context, I am proposing a discourse analysis study related to a shift from punitive to positive discipline. This analysis may improve the positive language that is presented in Figure 1 by identifying language that could improve the effectiveness of positive discipline. In addition, since a positive disciplinary framework will be a significant change, a Manitoba case study that includes senior administrators relating their experiences of shifting from punitive to positive discipline may be necessary. In this regard, this study has given me the foundation to segue into doctoral studies. At the PhD level, using the case study approach, I would like to study how senior administrators relate to the shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline and how their disciplinary practices and policies are influenced by the law. From this potential study, I could further contribute to a positive disciplinary framework that is relevant to the Canadian legal context.

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# Appendix A: Ethics Certificate

BRANDON UNIVERSITY

## Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC)
## Ethics Certificate for Research Involving Human Participants

The Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) has reviewed and approved this ethics proposal in accordance with the current *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2-2014)*, the *Brandon University Policy on Research Involving Humans*, and the *Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) Policies and Procedures.*

This approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted only for the research and purposes as described in the ethics application.
2. Ethics Certification is valid for up to five (5) years from the date approved, pending receipt of Annual Progress Reports. As per *BUREC Policies and Procedures*, Section 6.0, "At a minimum, continuing ethics research review shall consist of an Annual Report for multi-year projects and a Final Report at the end of all projects… Failure to fulfill the continuing research ethics review requirements is considered an act of non-compliance and may result in the suspension of active ethics certification; refusal to review and approve any new research ethics submission, and/or others as outlined in Section 10.0".
3. Any changes made to the protocol must be reported to the BUREC prior to implementation. See *BUREC Policies and Procedures* for more detail.
4. Any deviations to the research or adverse events must be submitted to the BUREC as soon as possible.

As per *BUREC Policies and Procedures*, Section 10.0, "Brandon University requires that all faculty members, staff, and students adhere to the *BUREC Policies and Procedures*. The University considers non-compliance and the inappropriate treatment of human participants to be a serious offence, subject to penalties, including, but not limited to, formal written documentation including permanently in one's personnel file, suspension of ethics certification, withdrawal of privileges to conduct research involving humans, and/or disciplinary action."

| | |
|---|---|
| **Principal Investigator:** | **Ms. Natashalee Thompson, Brandon University** |
| **Title of Project:** | **Shifting from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline** |
| Co-Investigators: | n/a |
| Faculty Supervisor: *(if applicable)* | Dr. Cathryn Smith, Brandon University |
| Research Ethics File #: | 22432 |
| Date of Approval: | March 7, 2019 |
| Ethics Expiry Date: | March 7, 2024 |
| **Authorizing Signature:** | |

NAME
Chair, Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC)

# Appendix B: Letter to Superintendent for Permission

BRANDON UNIVERSITY

Date.

Dear Superintendent,

I am Natashalee Thompson, a graduate student enrolled in the Master of Education program at the Brandon University. I am writing to invite you to participate in a study that I am conducting in Manitoba. Though I am the principal investigator, this study is supervised by Dr. Cathryn Smith, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. Dr. Cathryn Smith can be contacted via email at SmithC@BrandonU.ca. The focus of this study is on school administrators' experiences in shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline, as well as the possible influence of Canadian laws on such a shift. Accordingly, this study is guided by two questions:

1. How do school leaders experience a shift in paradigm from punitive to positive school-based discipline?
2. How might federal and provincial laws influence school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline?

The purpose of conducting this study is to provide recommendations for a positive school-based disciplinary policy and that this study will serve as a guide for school administrators as they shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline.

For this reason, I am seeking your permission to approach school administrators as well as other academic and non-academic staff (to include teachers-in-charge, teachers, guidance counselors, and school resource officers) in your division to voluntarily participate in this study. If permission is granted, potential participants will be contacted initially via telephone or email to see whether or not they would be interested in this study. Thereafter, potential participants will be emailed a description of the study as well as a consent form to indicate whether or not they would like to participate. If school administrators choose to participate in this study, they will be consenting to participate in a series of semi-formal interviews during which they will respond to a number of questions regarding the main research questions. Each interview session will last for approximately 30 minutes. The interviews will take place from March to June with up to eight scheduled interviews.

In a similar manner, academic and non-academic staff that choose to participate in this study will be consenting to participate in a number of semi-formal interviews during which they will respond to questions regarding the main research questions. Each interview session will last for about 30 minutes. These interviews will take place from March to June of the school year with up to eight scheduled interviews. Consequently, administrators, academic and non-academic staff's involvement would include meeting at an agreed time and location to voluntarily respond to questions that I will ask during interview sessions. The interview sessions will be audio-recorded for the purpose of analyzing data. All interview recordings will be transcribed by me and secured via passwords on my computer to avoid any breach of privacy or confidentiality. Participants will be emailed their respective transcripts and given a week for member-checking

(to delete, add, or change response to questions). The emailed transcripts will become a part of the data if participant do not give a response after one week and this would indicate their approval of the transcripts. Also, if possible, I might ask to view artefacts (such as disciplinary policies, blank disciplinary recording sheets, posters, prompts, restorative guidelines and any other school material if available) as a means of triangulating data that will aid in answering the research questions. These artefacts will not contain any student data or any other data that should be protected.

For the purposes of this study, the School Division and participants within the Division will not be identified in the thesis. The study will be of minimal risk to participants and in general. There are potential benefits associated with this study. Administrators, academic and non-academic staff sharing their experiences will enable recommendations that would be beneficial to a positive school-based disciplinary framework for their division and others. Also, administrators' respective experience in shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline will be beneficial to other school administrators who are about to undertake such a shift. Additionally, the interview sessions will serve as a reflective process that could help administrators, academic and non-academic staff to make changes or to incorporate new strategies regarding positive school-based discipline. In addition, it should be noted that based on the nature of the research, if the abuse of children or persons in care is discovered during the course of this study, there is a requirement by law for me to report such incident to the relevant authorities.

This study is being conducted based on approval from the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC). If you have any question regarding the research, please contact the principal investigator, Natashalee Thompson via email at thompsn62@brandonu.ca. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Cathryn Smith at SmithC@BrandonU.ca. You may also contact the BU Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) directly at 204-727-9712 or burec@brandonu.ca. **If you would like to give permission for me to approach school administrators in your division, kindly complete the attached consent form and return it via email to thompsn62@brandonu.ca.**

Sincerely,

Natashalee Thompson.

## Appendix C: Permission for Informed Consent from Superintendent

BRANDON UNIVERSITY

Date.

I have been given the opportunity to read the above description of this research, and I understand it. I agree to give the principal investigator, Natashalee Thompson permission to approach school administrators in the Division for the purpose of conducting the specified research study. The boxes checked below indicate the extent of my consent:

☐ I give consent for Natashalee Thompson to approach school administrators and academic and non-academic staff in the Division to conduct the specified research as outlined in the above description.

☐ I have supervision or responsibility for School Resource Officers and give Natashalee Thompson consent to approach School Resource Officers to conduct the specified research as outlined above.

☐ I would like to receive a copy of the research findings once the study is completed.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Division: _____

Email: _____

I am aware that participating in this research is voluntary and as a result, I can withdraw my consent/participation at any time before the completion of data analysis by contacting Natashalee Thompson at thompsn62@brandonu.ca. Also, by giving consent/participating in the study I have not waived any rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm.

**Please return the signed consent form to Natashalee Thompson via email at thompsn62@brandonu.ca.**

Thank you for your permission.

Natashalee Thompson.

# Appendix D: Letter to Supervisor of School Resource/Law Enforcement Officers for Permission

Date.

Dear Supervisor,

I am Natashalee Thompson, a graduate student enrolled in the Master of Education program at the Brandon University. I am writing to invite you to participate in a study that I am conducting in Manitoba. Though I am the principal investigator, this study is supervised by Dr. Cathryn Smith, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. Dr. Cathryn Smith can be contacted via email at SmithC@BrandonU.ca. The focus of this study is on school administrators' experiences in shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline, as well as the possible influence of Canadian laws on such a shift. Accordingly, this study is guided by two questions:

1. How do school leaders experience a shift in paradigm from punitive to positive school-based discipline?
2. How might federal and provincial laws influence school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline?

The purpose of conducting this study is to provide recommendations for a positive school-based disciplinary policy and that this study will serve as a guide for school administrators as they shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline.

For this reason, I am seeking your permission to approach School Resource Officers to voluntarily participate in this study. If permission is granted, potential participants will be contacted initially via telephone or email to see whether or not they would be interested in this study. Thereafter, potential participants will be emailed a description of the study as well as a consent form to indicate whether or not they would like to participate. If School Resource Officers choose to participate in this study, they will be consenting to participate in a series of semi-formal interviews during which they will respond to a number of questions regarding the main research questions. Each interview session will last for approximately 30 minutes. The interviews will take place from March to June with up to five scheduled interviews.

Consequently, the School Resource Officers' involvement would include meeting at an agreed time and location to voluntarily respond to questions that I will ask during interview sessions. The interview sessions will be audio-recorded for the purpose of analyzing data. All interview recordings will be transcribed by me and secured via passwords on my computer to avoid any breach of privacy or confidentiality. Participants will be emailed their respective transcripts and given a week for member-checking (to delete, add, or change response to questions). It should be noted that the emailed transcripts will become a part of the data if participants do not give a response after one week and this would indicate their approval of the transcripts. Also, if possible, I might ask to view artefacts (such as blank recording sheets or any other material if possible and/or available) that are utilized during or after school visits as a means of

triangulating data that will aid in answering the research questions. These artefacts should not contain any student data or any other data that should be protected

For the purposes of this study, your organization (the Police Service) and participants (School Resource Officers) will not be identified in the thesis. The study will be of minimal risk to participants and in general. There are potential benefits associated with this study. School Resource Officers sharing their experiences will enable recommendations that would be beneficial to a positive school-based disciplinary framework for the community and the province. In addition, it should be noted that based on the nature of the research, if the abuse of children or persons in care is discovered during the course of this study, there is a requirement by law for me to report such incident to the relevant authorities.

This study is being conducted based on approval from the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC). If you have any question regarding the research, please contact the principal investigator, Natashalee Thompson via email at thompsn62@brandonu.ca. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Cathryn Smith at SmithC@BrandonU.ca. You may also contact the BU Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) directly at 204-727-9712 or burec@brandonu.ca. **If you would like to give permission for me to approach School Resource Officers, kindly complete the attached consent form and return it via email to thompsn62@brandonu.ca.**

Sincerely,

Natashalee Thompson.

## Appendix E: Permission for Informed Consent for Supervisor of School Resource/Law Enforcement Officers

Date.

I have been given the opportunity to read the above description of this research, and I understand it. I agree to give the principal investigator, Natashalee Thompson permission to approach School Resource Officers for the purpose of conducting the specified research study. The boxes checked below indicate the extent of my consent:

☐ I give consent for Natashalee Thompson to approach School Resource Officers to conduct the specified research as outlined in the above description.

☐ I would like to receive a copy of the research findings once the study is completed.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Area: _____

Email: _____

I am aware that participating in this research is voluntary and as a result, I can withdraw my consent/participation at any time before the completion of data analysis by contacting Natashalee Thompson at thompsn62@brandonu.ca. Also, by giving consent/participating in the study I have not waived any rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm.

**Please return the signed consent form to Natashalee Thompson via email at thompsn62@brandonu.ca.**

Thank you for your permission.

Natashalee Thompson.

# Appendix F: Initial Contact Script Following Permission from Superintendents and Supervisors

BRANDON UNIVERSITY

**Phone Call: School Leader**

Hello XXX, I am Natashalee Thompson, a graduate student enrolled in the Master of Education program at the Brandon University.

(Listen to response)

I am calling to find out if you would be interested in participating in a study that I am conducting. I have been given permission to contact you from XXX (the superintendent).

(Listen to response)

The title of the study is "Shifting from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline". I am the principal investigator but this study is supervised by Dr. Cathryn Smith, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. This study is also being conducted with the approval of the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC). If you indicate an interest, additional information will be emailed to you. Your involvement would include interviews, recommendations of potential staff members to approach and sharing items such as blank forms or scripts used in responding to discipline concerns. The timeframe for your involvement would be between March and June 2019. Would this be an area that you are interested in?

(Listen to response)

**If the response is yes, the following will be said:**

Thank you for expressing an interest, I will send you an email that outlines the description and purpose of the research, as well as the requirements for participation, and a consent form to complete and sign if you would like to participate.

(Listen to response)

Thank you for your time. The email will be sent to you shortly.

**If the response is no, the following will be said:**

Okay, thank you for your time.

**Phone Call: School Resource/Law Enforcement Officer**

Hello XXX, I am Natashalee Thompson, a graduate student enrolled in the Master of Education program at the Brandon University.

(Listen to response)

I am calling to find out if you would be interested in participating in a study that I am conducting. I have been given permission to contact you from XXX (the supervisor).

(Listen to response)

The title of the study is "Shifting from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline". I am the principal investigator but this study is supervised by Dr. Cathryn Smith, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. This study is also being conducted with the approval of the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC). If you indicate an interest, additional information will be emailed to you. Your involvement would include interviews and sharing items such as blank forms or scripts used in responding to discipline concerns. The timeframe for your involvement would be between March and June 2019. Would this be an area that you are interested in?

(Listen to response)

**If the response is yes, the following will be said:**

Thank you for expressing an interest, I will send you an email that outlines the description and purpose of the research, as well as the requirements for participation, and a consent form to complete and sign if you would like to participate.

(Listen to response)

Thank you for your time. The email will be sent to you shortly.

**If the response is no, the following will be said:**

Okay, thank you for your time.

**Email: School Leader**

Dear XXX,

I am Natashalee Thompson, a graduate student enrolled in the Master of Education program at the Brandon University. I am contacting you to find out if you would be interested in participating in a study that I am conducting. I have been given permission to contact you from XXX (the superintendent).The title of the study is "Shifting from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline". I am the principal investigator but this study is supervised by Dr. Cathryn Smith, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. This study is also being conducted with the approval of the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC). Your involvement would include interviews, recommendations of potential staff members to approach and sharing items such as blank forms or scripts used in responding to discipline concerns. The timeframe for your involvement would be between March and June 2019.

Please let me know if this is an area that you are interested in. If you indicate an interest, additional information will be emailed to you that outline the description and purpose of the research, as well as the requirements for participation, and a consent form to complete and sign if you would like to participate.

Best,

Natashalee Thompson

**Email: Academic and Non-Academic Staff**

Dear XXX,

I am Natashalee Thompson, a graduate student enrolled in the Master of Education program at the Brandon University. I am contacting you to find out if you would be interested in participating in a study that I am conducting. I have been given permission to contact you from XXX (the superintendent and principal). The title of the study is "Shifting from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline". I am the principal investigator but this study is supervised by Dr. Cathryn Smith, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. This study is also being conducted with the approval of the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC). Your involvement would be participating in a few interview sessions. The timeframe for your involvement would be between March and June 2019.

Please let me know if this is an area that you are interested in. If you indicate an interest, additional information will be emailed to you that outline the description and purpose of the research, as well as the requirements for participation, and a consent form to complete and sign if you would like to participate.

Best,

Natashalee Thompson

**Email: School Resource/Law Enforcement Officer**

Dear XXX,

I am Natashalee Thompson, a graduate student enrolled in the Master of Education program at the Brandon University. I am contacting you to find out if you would be interested in participating in a study that I am conducting. I have been given permission to contact you from XXX (the supervisor).The title of the study is "Shifting from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline". I am the principal investigator but this study is supervised by Dr. Cathryn Smith, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. This study is also being conducted with the approval of the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC). Your involvement would include interviews and sharing items such as blank forms or scripts used in responding to discipline concerns. The timeframe for your involvement would be between March and June 2019.

Please let me know if this is an area that you are interested in. If you indicate an interest, additional information will be emailed to you that outline the description and purpose of the research, as well as the requirements for participation, and a consent form to complete and sign if you would like to participate.

Best,

Natashalee Thompson

# Appendix G: Letter to School Administrator/Leader for Permission

BRANDON UNIVERSITY

Date.

Dear School Administrators,

I am Natashalee Thompson, a graduate student enrolled in the Master of Education program at the Brandon University with a specialization in Leadership and Educational Administration. I am writing to invite you to participate in a study that I am conducting in Manitoba. Though I am the principal investigator, this study is supervised by Dr. Cathryn Smith, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. Dr. Cathryn Smith can be contacted via email at SmithC@BrandonU.ca. The focus of this study is on school administrators' experience in shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline, as well as the possible influence of Canadian laws on such a shift. Accordingly, this study is guided by two questions:

1. How do school leaders experience a shift in paradigm from punitive to positive school-based discipline?
2. How might federal and provincial laws influence school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline?

The purpose of conducting this study is to provide recommendations for a positive school-based disciplinary policy and that this study will serve as a guide for school administrators as they shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline.

Based on the nature of the study, there is one main way to participate as an administrator. For this reason, I am seeking your consent to participate in a series of semi-formal interviews during which you can respond to a number of questions regarding the main research questions. Also, if possible, I might ask to view artefacts (such as disciplinary policies, blank disciplinary recording sheets, posters, prompts, restorative guidelines and any other school material if available) as a means of obtaining additional information that will aid in answering the research questions. These artefacts should not contain any student data or any other data that should be protected. Regarding the interview, each session will last for approximately 30 minutes. The interviews will take place from March to June in the school year with up to eight scheduled interviews. Consequently, your involvement would include meeting at an agreed time and location to voluntarily respond to questions that I will ask during interview sessions.

Additionally, I am kindly asking you to recommend staff members to participate in this study who are experiencing or have experienced a shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline. Thereafter, I will be seeking permission from you to approach the academic and non-academic staff (to include teachers-in-charge, teachers, and guidance counselors) that you have recommended to voluntarily participate in this study. If permission is granted, potential participants will be contacted initially via telephone or email to see whether or not they would be interested in this study. Thereafter, potential participants will be emailed a description of the study as well as a consent form to indicate whether or not they would like to voluntary participate in this study. These potential participants will be consenting to participate in a number of semi-formal interviews during which they will respond to questions regarding the

main research questions. Each interview session will last for about 30 minutes. These interviews will also take place from March to June of the school year with up to eight scheduled interviews. Similar to administrators, academic and non-academic staff's involvement would include meeting at an agreed time and location to voluntarily respond to questions that I will ask during interview sessions. All of the interview sessions for administrators, academic and non-academic staff will be audio-recorded for the purpose of analyzing data. All interview recordings will be transcribed by me and secured via passwords on my computer to avoid any breach of privacy or confidentiality. Also, you will be emailed a copy of each transcript and given a week for member-checking (to delete, add, or change response to questions). It should be noted that the emailed transcripts will become a part of the data if you do not give a response after one week and this would indicate your approval of the transcripts.

This study is being conducted with the approval of the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC). If you choose to participate in this study as an administrator, it will be of minimal risk to you as a participant. However, there is the possibility of a temporary emotional reaction to a question from the interview session. There are potential benefits associated with this study. Sharing your experience will enable recommendations that could be beneficial to a positive school-based disciplinary framework for your institution and others. Also, your experience in shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline will be beneficial to other school administrators who are about to undertake such a shift. Additionally, the interview sessions will serve as a reflective process that could help you as an administrator to make changes or to incorporate new strategies regarding positive school-based discipline.

There is no pressure or any undue influence for you to participate in this study. There will be no repercussions from me as the principal investigator or from your employer (the School Division) whether you decide to participate or not in the study. Also, if you choose to participate in this study, your participation is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw and can request the removal of your data contributions at any time up until data analysis is complete. Furthermore, if you choose to participate in the study, you have not waived any rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm. Throughout this study, you will be reminded of your rights as a participant.

In regards to publication and/or dissemination, the primary means of distributing findings will be in the publication of a thesis document. Additionally, findings will be distributed via conference presentations (oral or written) and peer-reviewed journal articles. However, throughout the publication and/or dissemination process, you will remain anonymous as a participant and utmost care will be taken to secure data. Data will be secured via password on my computer. The computer will be locked away in my home unless in use or in transit. In addition, it should be noted that based on the nature of the research, if the abuse of children or persons in care is discovered during the course of this study, there is a requirement by law for me to report such incident to the relevant authorities.

If you have any question regarding the research, please contact the principal investigator, Natashalee Thompson via email at thompsn62@brandonu.ca. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Cathryn Smith at SmithC@BrandonU.ca. You may also contact the BU Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) directly at 204-727-9712 or burec@brandonu.ca. **If you would like to participate in this study, kindly complete the attached consent form and return it via email to thompsn62@brandonu.ca.**

Sincerely,

Natashalee Thompson

# Appendix H: Permission for Informed Consent from School Administrator/Leader

Date.

I have been given the opportunity to read the above description of this research, and I understand it. I agree to participate in the research being conducted by the principal investigator, Natashalee Thompson, entitled "Shifting from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline". The boxes checked below indicate the extent of my consent:

☐ I give consent to voluntarily participate in the research being conducted by Natashalee Thompson.

☐ I agree to participate in audio-recorded informal/semi-structured interview sessions.

☐ I would like to receive a copy of the research findings once the study is completed.

☐ I give consent for Natashalee Thompson to approach academic and non-academic staff to conduct the specified research as outlined in the above description.

I am aware that participating in this research is voluntary and as a result, I can withdraw my participation at any time before the completion of data analysis by contacting Natashalee Thompson at thompsn62@brandonu.ca. Also, by participating in the study I have not waived any rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Email: _____

**Please return the signed consent form to Natashalee Thompson via email at thompsn62@brandonu.ca.**

Thank you for your participation.

Natashalee Thompson.

## Appendix I: Letter to Academic and Non-Academic Staff for Permission

BRANDON UNIVERSITY

Date.

Dear XXX,

I am Natashalee Thompson, a graduate student enrolled in the Master of Education program at the Brandon University with a specialization in Leadership and Educational Administration. I am writing to invite you to participate in a study that I am conducting in Manitoba. Though I am the principal investigator, this study is supervised by Dr. Cathryn Smith, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. Dr. Cathryn Smith can be contacted via email at SmithC@BrandonU.ca. The focus of this study is on school administrators' experience in shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline, as well as the possible influence of Canadian laws on such a shift. Accordingly, this study is guided by two questions:

1. How do school leaders experience a shift in paradigm from punitive to positive school-based discipline?
2. How might federal and provincial laws influence school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline?

The purpose of conducting this study is to provide recommendations for a positive school-based disciplinary policy and that this study will serve as a guide for school administrators as they shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline.

Based on the nature of the study, there is one main way to participate. For this reason, I am seeking your consent to participate in a series of semi-formal interviews during which you can respond to a number of questions regarding the main research questions. Each interview session will last for approximately 30 minutes. The interviews will take place from March to June in the school year with up to eight scheduled interviews. Consequently, your involvement would include meeting at an agreed time and location to voluntarily respond to questions that I will ask during interview sessions. The interview sessions will be audio-recorded for the purpose of analyzing data. All interview recordings will be transcribed by me and secured via passwords on my computer to avoid any breach of privacy or confidentiality. Also, you will be emailed a copy of each transcript and given a week for member-checking (to delete, add, or change response to questions). It should be noted that the emailed transcripts will become a part of the data if you do not give a response after one week and this would indicate your approval of the transcripts.

This study is being conducted with the approval of the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC). If you choose to participate in this study, it will be of minimal risk to you as a participant. However, there is the possibility of a temporary emotional reaction to a question from the interview session. There are potential benefits associated with this study. Sharing your experience regarding punitive and positive disciplinary measures will enable recommendations that could be beneficial to a positive school-based disciplinary framework for your institution and others. Additionally, the interview sessions will serve as a reflective process that could help you as staff to make changes or to incorporate new strategies regarding positive school-based discipline.

There is no pressure or any undue influence for you to participate in this study. There will be no repercussions from me as the principal investigator or from your school administrators and/or the School Division whether you decide to participate or not in the study. Also, if you choose to participate in this study, your participation is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw and can request the removal of your data contributions at any time up until data analysis is complete. Furthermore, if you choose to participate in the study, you have not waived any rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm. Throughout this study, you will be reminded of your rights as a participant.

In regards to publication and/or dissemination, the primary means of distributing findings will be in the publication of a thesis document. Additionally, findings will be distributed via conference presentations (oral or written) and peer-reviewed journal articles. However, throughout the publication and/or dissemination process, you will remain anonymous as a participant and utmost care will be taken to secure data. Data will be secured via password on my computer. The computer will be locked away in my home unless in use or in transit. In addition, it should be noted that based on the nature of the research, if the abuse of children or persons in care is discovered during the course of this study, there is a requirement by law for me to report such incident to the relevant authorities.

If you have any question regarding the research, please contact the principal investigator, Natashalee Thompson via email at thompsn62@brandonu.ca. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Cathryn Smith at SmithC@BrandonU.ca. You may also contact the BU Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) directly at 204-727-9712 or burec@brandonu.ca. **If you would like to participate in this study, kindly complete the attached consent form and return it via email to thompsn62@brandonu.ca.**

Sincerely,

Natashalee Thompson

## Appendix J: Permission for Informed Consent from Academic/Non-Academic Staff

Date.

I have been given the opportunity to read the above description of this research, and I understand it. I agree to participate in the research being conducted by the principal investigator, Natashalee Thompson, entitled "Shifting from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline". The boxes checked below indicate the extent of my consent:

☐ I give consent to voluntarily participate in the research being conducted by Natashalee Thompson.

☐ I agree to participate in audio-recorded informal/semi-structured interview sessions.

☐ I would like to receive a copy of the research findings once the study is completed.

I am aware that participating in this research is voluntary and as a result, I can withdraw my participation at any time before the completion of data analysis by contacting Natashalee Thompson at thompsn62@brandonu.ca. Also, by participating in the study I have not waived any rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Email: _____

**Please return the signed consent form to Natashalee Thompson via email at thompsn62@brandonu.ca.**

Thank you for your participation.

Natashalee Thompson.

# Appendix K: Letter to School Resource/Law Enforcement Officers for Permission

BRANDON UNIVERSITY

Date.

Dear XXX,

I am Natashalee Thompson, a graduate student enrolled in the Master of Education program at the Brandon University with a specialization in Leadership and Educational Administration. I am writing to invite you to participate in a study that I am conducting in Manitoba. Though I am the principal investigator, this study is supervised by Dr. Cathryn Smith, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. Dr. Cathryn Smith can be contacted via email at SmithC@BrandonU.ca. The focus of this study is on school administrators' experience in shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline, as well as the possible influence of Canadian laws on such a shift. Accordingly, this study is guided by two questions:

1. How do school leaders experience a shift in paradigm from punitive to positive school-based discipline?
2. How might federal and provincial laws influence school leaders' shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline?

The purpose of conducting this study is to provide recommendations for a positive school-based disciplinary policy and that this study will serve as a guide for school administrators as they shift from punitive to positive school-based discipline.

Based on the nature of the study, there is one main way to participate. For this reason, I am seeking your consent to participate in a series of semi-formal interviews during which you can respond to a number of questions regarding the main research questions. Each interview session will last for approximately 30 minutes. The interviews will take place from March to June in the school year with up to five scheduled interviews. Consequently, your involvement would include meeting at an agreed time and location to voluntarily respond to questions that I will ask during interview sessions. The interview sessions will be audio-recorded for the purpose of analyzing data. All interview recordings will be transcribed by me and secured via passwords on my computer to avoid any breach of privacy or confidentiality. You will be emailed a copy of each transcript and given a week for member-checking (to delete, add, or change response to questions). It should be noted that the emailed transcripts will become a part of the data if you do not give a response after one week and this would indicate your approval of the transcripts. Also if possible and/or available, I might ask to view artefacts such as blank recording sheets or any other material that are utilized during or after school visits. These artefacts should not contain any student data or any other data that should be protected

This study is being conducted with the approval of the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee (BUREC). If you choose to participate in this study, it will be of minimal risk to you as a participant. However, there is the possibility of a temporary emotional reaction to a question from the interview session. There are potential benefits associated with this study. Sharing your

experience regarding punitive and positive disciplinary measures and Canadian laws will enable recommendations that could be beneficial to a positive school-based disciplinary framework for the community and province.

There is no pressure or any undue influence for you to participate in this study. There will be no repercussions from me as the principal investigator or from your supervisor whether you decide to participate or not in the study. Also, if you choose to participate in this study, your participation is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw and can request the removal of your data contributions at any time up until data analysis is complete. Furthermore, if you choose to participate in the study, you have not waived any rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm. Throughout this study, you will be reminded of your rights as a participant.

In regards to publication and/or dissemination, the primary means of distributing findings will be in the publication of a thesis document. Additionally, findings will be distributed via conference presentations (oral or written) and peer-reviewed journal articles. However, throughout the publication and/or dissemination process, you will remain anonymous as a participant and utmost care will be taken to secure data. Data will be secured via password on my computer. The computer will be locked away in my home unless in use or in transit. In addition, it should be noted that based on the nature of the research, if the abuse of children or persons in care is discovered during the course of this study, there is a requirement by law for me to report such incident to the relevant authorities.

If you have any question regarding the research, please contact the principal investigator, Natashalee Thompson via email at thompsn62@brandonu.ca. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Cathryn Smith at SmithC@BrandonU.ca. You may also contact the BU Research Ethics Committee (BUREC) directly at 204-727-9712 or burec@brandonu.ca. **If you would like to participate in this study, kindly complete the attached consent form and return it via email to thompsn62@brandonu.ca.**

Sincerely,

Natashalee Thompson

## Appendix L: Permission for Informed Consent for School Resource/Law Enforcement Officers

BRANDON UNIVERSITY

Date.

I have been given the opportunity to read the above description of this research, and I understand it. I agree to participate in the research being conducted by the principal investigator, Natashalee Thompson, entitled "Shifting from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline". The boxes checked below indicate the extent of my consent:

☐ I give consent to voluntarily participate in the research being conducted by Natashalee Thompson.

☐ I agree to participate in audio-recorded informal/semi-structured interview sessions.

☐ I would like to receive a copy of the research findings once the study is completed.

I am aware that participating in this research is voluntary and as a result, I can withdraw my participation at any time before the completion of data analysis by contacting Natashalee Thompson at thompsn62@brandonu.ca. Also, by participating in the study I have not waived any rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Email: _____

**Please return the signed consent form to Natashalee Thompson via email at thompsn62@brandonu.ca.**

Thank you for your participation.

Natashalee Thompson.

# Appendix M: Probing Interview Questions for School Administrators/Leaders

Hello, thank you for consenting to participate and meeting with me. As you know, I am conducting a study entitled "Shifting from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline". The purpose of this interview is to obtain your experience as an administrator who has shifted from punitive to positive school-based discipline or who is currently shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline. It should be noted that the use of restorative justice is an aspect of positive discipline. Additionally, your experience regarding the possible influence of Canadian laws on such a shift is sought as well. This interview is voluntary and will take about 30 minutes. I want to remind you that the interview will be audio-recorded and that you have the option of ending the interview at any time. The recording will only be listened to by me for the purpose of data analysis. I will ask a number of questions and invite you to share your thoughts/ experiences.

**The questions below will be typical of the probing questions that might be asked during the interview sessions since specific questions will be generated based on the interviewee's responses to gain an understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.*

**Part One:**

1. Please introduce yourself. Tell me little about your educational background and how long you have been an administrator.
2. Based on your experience, what do you consider to be punitive disciplinary measures?
3. Reflecting on your experience, what kinds of punitive disciplinary measures have you utilized as an administrator?

4. Based on your knowledge, describe the impact of punitive disciplinary measures on students' behaviour.
5. Given your experience, what are some of the patterns you notice regarding the students who experience punitive discipline?
6. Based on your experience, describe any benefits or successes associated with the utilization of punitive disciplinary measures.
7. As you reflect on your experience, what are the situations that have influenced your experience shifting from punitive to positive disciplinary practices?
8. How might you describe the implementation of positive (or restorative justice as an approach to) discipline?
9. Based on your experience, how would you define positive (or restorative) disciplinary measures?
10. Based on your knowledge, describe the positive disciplinary (or restorative) approach that is being utilized in your school.
11. What are some kinds of positive disciplinary (or restorative justice) practices that you have utilized as an administrator?
12. How might you describe the impact of positive disciplinary (or restorative justice practices) on students' behaviour?
13. Based on your experience thus far, describe any benefits or successes associated with the utilization of positive disciplinary (or restorative justice) measures.
14. As you reflect on your leadership, what has been your experience shifting from punitive to positive (or restorative justice) practices?

15. How might you describe your current use of positive disciplinary (or restorative justice) practices?

**Part Two:**

1. Based on your experience, in what ways does the school community influence decisions within the school?
2. How might the school community influence disciplinary approaches?
3. How might you describe the school community's view of punitive disciplinary measures?
4. How might you describe the school community's view of positive approaches to discipline?
5. Based on your knowledge, describe the type of school-based disciplinary policy that is developed at the Board level.
6. Given your experience, describe the type of school-based disciplinary policy that is developed at the school/administrator's level.
7. Given your knowledge of professional developmental sessions, describe the frequency and type of legal training received from the School Division as an administrator.
8. In what ways have the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom* influenced your approach to discipline?
9. In what ways have the Manitoba *Public Schools Act* influenced your approach to discipline?
10. Based on your experience, what might be some ways in which the *YCJA* has influenced your approach to discipline?
11. In what ways have the *Safe Schools Charter* influenced your approach to discipline?

12. As you reflect on your leadership experience, describe the ways in which the *Human Rights Code* has influenced your approach to discipline.
13. What are some of the ways in which the *Education Administration Act* has influenced your approach to discipline?
14. Based on the Criminal Code, an agent of the state means "(a) a peace officer; and (b) a person acting under the authority of, or in cooperation with, a peace officer". Reflecting on your role in disciplinary issues, describe whether or not you may have acted as an agent of the state.
15. Given your experience with disciplinary matters, describe what happens when there is a situation that requires the School Resource Officer (SRO) or police.

# Appendix N: Probing Interview Questions for Academic and Non-Academic Staff

Hello, thank you for consenting to participate and meeting with me. As you know, I am conducting a study entitled "Shifting from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline". The purpose of this interview is to obtain your experience as staff member regarding your school shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline. It should be noted that the use of restorative justice is an aspect of positive discipline. Additionally, your experience regarding the possible influence of Canadian laws on such a shift is sought as well. This interview is voluntary and will take about 30 minutes. I want to remind you that the interview will be audio-recorded and that you have the option of ending the interview at any time. The recording will only be listened to by me for the purpose of data analysis. I will ask a number of questions and invite you to share your thoughts/ experiences.

**The questions below will be typical of the probing questions that might be asked during the interview sessions since specific questions will be generated based on the interviewee's responses to gain an understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.*

1. Please introduce yourself. Tell me little about your educational background and how long you have been working with school divisions and in what role/s?
2. Based on your experience, what do you consider to be punitive disciplinary measures?
3. Given your knowledge, what are some of the punitive disciplinary measures administrators have utilized?
4. Based on your experience, describe the impact of punitive disciplinary measures on students' behaviour.

5. Reflecting on your experience, describe any benefits or successes associated with the utilization of punitive disciplinary measures.
6. Based on your knowledge, what are some of the situations that might have influenced administrator shifting from punitive to positive disciplinary (or restorative justice) practices?
7. Given your knowledge, how might you describe the implementation of positive (or restorative justice as an approach to) discipline?
8. Based on your experience, how would you define positive (or restorative) disciplinary measures as implemented by the schools/school divisions in which you have worked?
9. Based on your knowledge, describe the positive disciplinary (or restorative) approaches that have been/are being utilized in the school divisions in which you have worked.
10. How would define restitution based on its use in the educational context?
11. What are some kinds of positive disciplinary (or restorative justice) practices that have been utilized by administrators?
12. How might you describe the impact of positive disciplinary (or restorative justice) practices on students' behaviour?
13. Based on your experience thus far, describe any benefits or successes associated with the utilization of positive disciplinary (or restorative justice) measures.
14. Given your experience, how might you describe the current use of positive disciplinary (or restorative justice) practices by teachers and school administrators (proactive versus reactive) in the divisions in which you have worked?
15. Based on your experience, what are some of the factors that account for the reactive use of restitution?

16. Given your experience, how long does it take to start transitioning or shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline?
17. Based on your knowledge, how would you describe the restitution training?
18. Given your experience, describe the importance of shifting from punitive to positive school-based discipline.
19. Given your knowledge, how might you describe the influence of federal laws on disciplinary approaches utilized at your school?
20. Given your experience, how might you describe the influence of provincial laws on disciplinary approaches utilized at your school?

# Appendix O: Probing Interview Questions for School Resource/Law Enforcement Officers

Hello, thank you for consenting to participate and meeting with me. As you know, I am conducting a study entitled "Shifting from Punitive to Positive School-Based Discipline". The purpose of this interview is to obtain your experience as a SRO/police officer regarding your role and interactions with school administrators in student-related disciplinary issues. It should be noted that the use of restorative justice is an aspect of positive discipline. Additionally, your experience and knowledge regarding the possible influence of Canadian laws on the administering of discipline is sought as well. This interview is voluntary and will take about 30 minutes. I want to remind you that the interview will be audio-recorded and that you have the option of ending the interview at any time. The recording will only be listened to by me for the purpose of data analysis. I will ask a number of questions and invite you to share your thoughts/ experiences.

**The questions below will be typical of the probing questions that might be asked during the interview sessions since specific questions will be generated based on the interviewee's responses to gain an understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.*

1. Please introduce yourself. Tell me little about your educational background to include your training and how long you have been a SRO/police officer.
2. Based on your knowledge, how would you describe your role as a SRO/police officer?
3. As you reflect on your experience, how might you describe your interaction with school administrators regarding disciplinary issues?

4. Based on your experience, describe what happens when you are requested at a school to intervene in a student-related disciplinary matter?
5. Given your experience, what are some of the student-related disciplinary issues you are summoned for?
6. Based on your knowledge, how would you describe your presence in schools?
7. As you reflect on your experience, how might you describe your approach to discipline?
8. Given your knowledge, how might you define an agent of the state?
9. Based on your experience, what are some of the laws you observe when intervening in or dealing with student-related disciplinary issues?
10. As you reflect on your role as a SRO/police officer, describe any benefits or successes that you have had from intervening in a student-related disciplinary matter.
11. As you reflect on your role as a SRO/police officer, describe any challenges or failures that you have had from intervening in a student-related disciplinary matter.
12. Given your experience, how might you describe the recidivism rate in schools after your intervention?
13. Based on your knowledge, what are some of the patterns you notice regarding the students you have dealt with?
14. Reflecting on your experience, what are some alternate measures that school administrators could utilize before summoning you?
15. Given your knowledge, describe the nature and frequency of any professional developmental sessions that you have taken as a SRO/police officer.